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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman."

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XX]

MAY, 1933

[No. 1

HINDU ETHICS



वैरिणं नोपसेवेत सहायं चैव वैरिणः ।
अधार्मिकं तस्करं च परस्यैव च योषितम् ॥
नात्मानमवमन्येत पूर्वाभिरसमृद्धिभिः ।
आमृत्योः श्रियमन्विच्छेन्नैनां मन्येत दुर्लभाम् ॥
सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् ।
प्रियं च नावृत्तं ब्रूयादेष धर्मः सनातनः ॥
हीनाङ्गानतिरिक्ताङ्गान् विद्याहीनान् वयोधिकान् ।
रूपद्रव्यविहीनांश्च जातिहीनांश्च नाक्षिपेत् ॥

Let not a man intimately associate with his enemy or with the friends of his enemy, with an unrighteous person, with a thief or with another's wife.

A person should not disparage himself because of his past failures. Let him promote his welfare until death, and never regard it as beyond his reach.

One should speak the truth and speak the truth that is pleasant. One should not utter a disagreeable truth nor tell an agreeable falsehood. This is the eternal virtue.

One should not be rude towards those who are defective in limbs or who have redundant limbs, who are illiterate, who are aged, who are wanting in beauty or wealth or who are of low birth.

MANUSAMHITA

If he does not want to work, hunger will make him work. Do not give way to laziness. Do not think that rest of the body is rest of the Self, the ego is naturally restless and its place is to work. Therefore, you must not neglect your duties. Perhaps I am a rationalist and do not believe in the infallibility of the Vedas ; I only do what I know to be right. Very good. But do that which seems right to you, do not be lazy. A lazy man never attains to anything.

"Do not be attached to the results. As a yogi should work, so you also work." Whether you get the desired result or not, if you do not care, then you are a true yogi. You may not 'succeed', but if you keep on working, you are a true yogi and will reach the highest bliss. The *Karma* which ordinary men do, having some thought to results, is a very inferior Karma. Those who give up all to God are far superior. When a man looks to results he is the most miserable man in the world. If he fails, he gets angry even with his own wife, and sometimes he may go so far as to commit suicide. Therefore do such works as will lead you not to care for results. Those who care for results are pitiable creatures.

When a man does really work without caring for the results he will not be affected by suffering or enjoyment. But even if he gives up earthly enjoyments and still cares for celestial enjoyment, he will not be happy. Enjoyment binds a man as much as suffering. Suffering is a bondage and it binds man. But happiness is also a bondage. The little fish sells his life for the small piece of sweet bait. The result of good works is enjoyment, the result of ordinary works is suffering ; but both bind man and yet every man wants to be free. No one wishes to be bound even the little bird in the cage longs for freedom. So whatever binds a man, whether misery or enjoyment cannot make him happy. One is an iron chain, the other is a gold chain. He who cares for neither the

results of good actions nor of bad actions attains freedom and salvation. So it was that the *Gopis* who were locked up in the room and unable to go to Sri Krishna, attained to salvation. First their intense suffering in not being able to go to him washed off the results of their past bad actions. Then when they were able to rise above this and embrace their Beloved, losing themselves in deep meditation, the results of their past good actions were washed off. They rise above both and attained salvation. In this way a man gets rid of both evil and good actions; if he knows how to practice true Karma Yoga. The man who gives up all results frees himself from good action and bad. A true *Yogi* rises above both. Yoga is a dextrous way of handling work. Work is the cause of all bondage. Work increases the number of your desires and the more you increase your desires, the more you are tied to work. But Karma Yoga teaches you how to handle work in such a manner that even this same work, instead of causing bondage, will bring you salvation. When your purified mind will be able to get rid of the illusion of ordinary action which leads you to look for results, then you will never be attached to anything in this world. At that moment you will become the happiest man and you will attain the highest truth. Because you are a worker, you should continue to work, but as the servant of the Lord. Just as a servant works for his master, knowing full well whether the master will pay or not. But here you have a master who is all-perfect, all-loving, so if you work as his servant, you will never regret it. Even if the results do not come, you will know that He does not will it and so you accept it cheerfully. When you will know this grand truth, your duties will be over. Nothing more will be left to be learned. This is the highest truth. We are born workers and we are the servants of the Lord. The moment we know this, we know all truth. Knowledge gives us power. Knowledge makes us masters. Why do you want to be a master, instead of being

master is always the happiest state. No slave is truly happy. So because knowledge makes you a master, you are always trying to know more. But if you have the key to the highest happiness, which is the end of all knowledge and powers, nothing else remains for you. Therefore what you have learned and what is yet to be learned will fall off from you and your struggle will end at that moment.

You know that you are serving a Master, who is your dear father, your dear mother, no one is so good as He; how can you fear to serve such a Master; you must be perfectly content, altogether at rest, so you will no longer need what you have learned and you will not care for what is to be learned. You have joined yourself to God. Your movement is God's movement. What is the result? The result is the highest bliss. You can never make a false step any more. When with the help of God's teaching, the infallible teaching of God himself, your intellectual faculties will be free from all doubts; then that one idea will be there: He is the eternal master, I am His servant.

Some people say that when getting disgusted with the various methods preached in the Vedas, you believe in one God without any other thought, then you can be free from all doubts and you will realize the highest truth. Mind is the cause of all trouble. Here is a fly. It flies here, it lies there, sits on this or on that object. But put a little sugar on its way; it lights on it and when it tastes it, nothing can drive it away; it can even be caught. For that little bit of sugar it sells its life, so enjoyment binds a man, and to be free, one should rise above enjoyment as well as pain.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

WITH this issue, the VEDANTA KESARI passes into the eleventh year of its publication and we take this opportunity of sending forth our cordial greetings to all our readers and friends. The work that was accomplished during the past decade makes us confident of the future and the prospect of future usefulness fills us with fresh hopes and new aspirations. Those of our readers who have been connected with the magazine from the time of its inception would feel happy to notice its steady growth and increase in extent of usefulness ; the *Kesari* is dear to them as it is dear to us.

The *Kesari* stands for the Advancement of True Religion and the message which it disseminates is a universal message, a message to all humanity. The ancient wisdom of the Aryan Rishi is the common heritage of all mankind. Men and women all over the world have a right to possess the grand and lofty thoughts of the Sages of India. The *Kesari* proposes to broadcast these thoughts through the medium of a language understood throughout the whole of the civilized world. In doing so, the *Kesari* allies itself with the WORLD-FORCES which are slowly but surely tending to make an organic whole of all humanity. The work which positive Science inaugurated finds its natural fulfilment in the unifying teachings of Vedanta philosophy. The speculations of all the diverse schools of thought find their culmination in the broad ideal of oneness upheld by the Vedanta system. It shall be the endeavour of the *Kesari* to place constantly before its readers the grand Vedantic ideal of oneness.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The time is ripe for the nations of the world to understand one another. Want of understanding leads to misunderstanding which ripens into positive suspicion engendering hatred and fratricidal strife. If the human race is to live in amity and peacefulness on the face of this planet the darkness of racial and religious prejudices should be dispelled by the light of reason. The East should understand the West and the West, in its turn, should understand the East. The past generation of Western Indologists endeavoured to evaluate the culture of ancient India and interpret it to the Western people; their success was only partial. For with most of them from the time of their child-hood onwards their minds were obsessed with the old Semitic myths of creation of the world in six days, of a whole race of serpents cursed for the fault of someone else, of chosen people, of divine favouritism, of eternal hell-fire and such other things. To defend these and similar religious doctrines and to keep themselves within the bounds of biblical chronology, well-meaning sensible people often went to the extent of discrediting proved geological facts. Science won in the long run and opened the way for unbiassed modes of thinking. Vedanta philosophy which is in perfect accord with the teachings of modern Science would as we have already stated bring about the natural fulfilment of the work inaugurated by Science. One of the chief functions of the *Kesari* from the time of its inception was to point out the harmony that exists between Modern Science and Vedantic Thought.

The present age has devised many new and improved means of communication. But let us bear in mind that annihilation of distance is not an unmixed blessing unless men's minds are brought closer together. The time and energy spent in laying out railway lines and telegraph wires could be better utilised in fusing heart to heart and mind to one another. A single centre of soul-force

which by its very presence could radiate the message of love and sincerity is much more useful to humanity than tens of thousands of radio-centres which any knave could utilise for mischievous propaganda calculated for furthering his own selfish ends. Centres of soul-force have, at all times, existed in the sacred soil of *Bharatavarsha*. The solidarity of the Hindus as a nation has been achieved by their readiness to link themselves to these centres. By centuries of experience the Hindus have learnt that their epochs of national revival have been and will continue to be always coeval with epochs of religious revival. The hope of humanity also lies in the same direction. When spirit comes in contact with kindred spirit the spark that is struck out is a spark of love which tends towards unification. When matter clashes with matter the spark produced is a spark of destruction. Mechanical means of communication may bring men together but they by themselves can never bring about the union of humanity. If men's hearts remain hardened their coming together would only produce sparks of destruction. The hope of humanity lies in recognising and putting into proper use the great spiritual laws which form the eternal basis of human society. The *Kesari* is and would continue to be a centre for the dissemination of pure and lofty thoughts, it would view contemporary events from the spiritual stand-point and suggest ways and means for the regeneration of India and the uplift of humanity.

The *Kesari* would hold forth hope for the weak and the oppressed by pointing out to them the eternal and never-failing source of strength; it would help all sincere and earnest souls in their search after truth. Sri Ramakrishna came for the good of all humanity. His precious teachings have, within a remarkably short period of time, permeated the thought-currents of nations and have worked for peace, harmony and brotherly love. The institutions founded in His holy name are

open to all. The work of these institutions is carried along broad unsectarian lines. It is needless for us to say that the *Kesari* which draws its inspiration from the same divine source is also being conducted along broad unsectarian lines.

To the people of India the special message which the *Kesari* has to deliver is, "Live, so that the world may live; vitalise your institutions for in them lies the hope of civilization; never deviate from the path of the *Dharma* for you have to demonstrate to the world that Truth leads to ultimate victory and that strength lies in righteousness; preserve your ancient culture for your own sake and for the sake of the world; have faith in yourselves, for you alone could be the lever on which humanity may be raised to a higher level of peace, good will and brotherly love."

TANTRIK RITUAL

Snana

ARTHUR AVALON

THE Prañah Kṛtya dealt with in the preceding article is followed by the Sandhya rite. The morning Sandhya should be performed after the morning bath. A word therefore, must be first said as regards bathing or Snana. It is commonly considered absurd that water should cleanse anything but the body. It is nevertheless clear that it cleanses from sin, if used with the purpose of, and in belief of, such cleansing. Sometimes the same people who criticise the ritual bathing of Hindus—the "bathing establishments"—to use an American professor's facile and superficial jest,—yet believe in a baptismal rite in the case of infants with no power of understanding or power to co-operate in what is sane. The Indian ritual worship is not magical but psychological. "What a man thinks that he becomes"—a saying of the Chandogya Upanishad repeated in substance by the Gandharva Tantra. It is the resolve of the mind to be cleansed and the belief of the mind that it will be cleansed which in fact cleanses the mind. So free is the Shastra of superstitious and magical ritualism that it says to one worshipping that if he believes that Ganga is present in any water (whatever it be), then though the material Ganga be far away yet Ganga is in that water for him.

The Saṅkīrṇa may take a mental as well as a material bath. Why, then, it may be asked, should the material bath be taken at all. Apart from the necessity of physical cleansing we reply, that it is necessary seeing that man is both body and mind, and acts at first more easily with material things. Moreover, the effect is intensified when both mind and body work in concert. Rudrayāmala says that by bathing one is freed from a load of sins. It adds: "He who bathes in the Shiva Tīrthas, what need has he of Ganga?" (In all the Six Centres there are Tīrthas. Ida is Bhagirathī, Ganga, Pingalā is Yamunā, and Sushumna is Sarasvatī. Where the three meet is called Tīrtharaṇī.)

There are six kinds of bath. Brahma, Ganga, Varuṇa, Divya, Varuṇa and Paugika. The first is performed with mantras and kushas, with drops of water in the palm of

done by sprinkling ashes on the body. The third is taken in dust raised by the feet of cows. The fourth is done in the sun's rays. The fifth is done by immersion in water and the sixth by meditation on the Self. For meditation on Vishnu is Atmatirtha producing purity of mind. Thus there may be no material bath and yet for puja purposes a bath. The mental bath is more efficacious than the mantra bath. The mode of Yaugika (a form of mental bath), is according to the mantra method as follows : "Sitting at ease think that over your head is Vishnu in the firmament, and that the river Ganga descending from His lotus-like feet is falling on your head, and that its waters are entering through your Brahmarandhra, washing and cleansing your whole body." The Mantrin, by such a bath becomes as clear as crystal. There are various forms of this bath so joyously taken by Yogis. A similar form is given in the Vishvasara Tantra. Shri Panchami speaks of the internal bath of the Shaktas as follows : "Calling to mind the three forms of Samvit issuing as a three-fold current of Sat, Chit, Ananda, perceivable by Bhava which grants liberation to Yogis, then think of yourself as deluged by That for the cessation of worldly existence." The Gandharva Tantra speaks of a mental bath done with Pranayama whilst thinking upon the union of Shiva and Shakti and then of bathing in the nectar produced thereby. The Shastra, however, says that it is not everyone who is competent to take a mental bath. It is only those who are pure-minded who can still further purify themselves by an undoubting faith in its efficacy.

Besides being material and mental, Snana is also Vaidika and Tantrika.

Vaidika Snana is as follows : "Say the Mulamantra and ~~Phat~~. Dig up a little clay with a stick. Take it together with Durva grass and rape seed in a pot of copper or other superior metal. Then bathe in the Ganga or other river, sea, lake, tank or other reservoir of water, for the satisfaction of Ishtadevata, remembering Him or Her at the same time in mind. In everything which is done the mind is kept trained on its proper object. It is not absolutely necessary to go to the river, for water may be brought from the river, warmed over a fire and purified by throwing into it gold, precious stones, kusha, bael-leaf or white rape seed. It is ordained that during bathing and Sandhya, rings of kusha grass should be worn. A Shakta obeys this rule by wearing a silver ring on

the forefinger and a gold ring on the ring-finger. They are not permitted to wear kusha. Silver and gold and not the forest kusha are the Shakti Sadhaka's kusha.

When he reaches the water the Sadhaka says either "Om, Tat Sat," or "Sri Vishnuh." He then cleanses a spot on the bank of the water with mantra Phat, and places the articles for the bath on that spot. Nothing is allowed to be done without thought. At every moment something is ordained to purify the Sadhaka, or that which is used by, or surrounds, him. All is a manifestation of the Pure, and by purifying the Self and ones surroundings the mind more readily perceives that truth. The Sadhaka then divides the clay he has brought with him into three parts, one of which he throws into the water saying at the same time the Mantra :—

"Om. Thou wast raised by the hundred armed black boar. Rising in my limbs, remove my sins (that is, the Devata Narayana manifests in the limbs of the Sadhaka). Oh, clay, thou art given by Brahma. Obeisance to thee, Oh earth, who art good and dost bear all creatures, and whom Kashyapa has built (Abhimantrita. All things are descendants of Kashyapa. See Markandeya Purana, Ch. 104, Vol. 2). Om, Who dost bear Vishnu Who is All and Whose glory is incomparable. Obeisance to such as are earth or born of earth."

After this the Sadhaka enters the water, first saying Om. Tat Sat, or the Mulamantra. If bathing is done in a reservoir of water belonging to another, he scoops up five balls of clay and throws them on the bank with the mantras "Arise, arise, Oh Clay, and give me the merit (punya) of another. (The meaning of this is that according to Smriti the merit earned by bathing goes to the man who excavates the tank. By scooping up the five balls of clay he symbolises excavation of the tank. The clay is thus addressed and asked not to bear merit for another but for the Sadhaka). Destroy my sins, give me ever peace."

Next standing in the water up to the navel and calling to mind Ganga, do Japa seven times of the Mantra "Hring, to Ganga Hring." Then call to mind the Ishtdevata. Unloose the hair and reciting the Mulamantra dip in water thrice. Turn either towards the Sun or the direction from which the water flows and rub the body with a white cloth. This is

the cleansing bath. Bathing in this way Ganga appears even in a tank.

Next, standing in the water as above, recite the Gayatri, tie the crest lock and do Pranayama and the Nyasa called Shadanga. Take the copper pot filled with water mixed with sesamum seed and make the resolve (sangkalpa, which precedes the rites) as follows :

“ Shri Vishnu. Om Tat Sat. Om. This day in month with the Sun in , constellation in fort-night in Tithi I am about to take a mantra bath for the satisfaction of Devata.”

Next stirring the water with the mantra “ Hring ” draw a square or triangle the size of a cubit in that water and invoke the Tirthas therein, with the Angkusha Mudra and the mantra “ Om namah krong. Oh Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri, be present in this water.” Next with joined palms, pray, “ Om, Whatever Tirthas there are in earth, are Oh sun, touched by thy rays. By this truth, Oh Deva, maker of the day, give me a Tirtha.” (That is, make the body in which he is bathing as holy as a Tirtha). Then invoke Ganga into the water with the mantra “ Om. I invoke Thee here, Fair Devi for this bath. Save me, Oh Ganga, Obeisance to Thee in Whom are all Tirthas.” Next show the Dhenu Mudra with the mantra “ Vang, the Avagunthana Mudra with the mantra “ I lung.” Protect with the Chakra Mudra, bind the ten directions by snapping the fingers with the mantra “ Phat.” Cover with the Matsya Mudra. Do Japa of the Mulamantra eleven times. Throw twelve handfuls of water towards the Sun, thinking that the water in that square or triangle contains the region of fire and the solar and lunar orbs. Let the Sadhaka think that he is bathing in water issuing from the lotus-like feet of Ishtadevata. Close the seven apertures of the body, repeating the Ishtamantra, and immerse the body up to the head thrice. Then doing Achamana with the aforesaid mantra and Shadanga Nyasa and Japa of the Mulamantra thrice in the water. Drench the head seven or five times with the Kalasa Mudra. Then doing Tarpana of father, grandfather and so forth rise, at desire, from the water and then throw three handfuls of water on the bank saying “ Om, Asuras, Bhutas, Vetalas, Kushmandas and Brahmarakshasas, May all these (evil) spirits be gratified by this water given by me. (Because of their nature they are

not to be forgotten and excluded from the operation of a benevolence which should be universal). On reaching land wipe the water off the person, put on a clean cloth and say the Sandhya prayer either on the bank or after returning home. Before doing Sandhya tie the Shika with the Gayatri and wear first the Urdhrapundra and then the Tripundra according to the instructions of the Guru. It may be that the morning bath cannot be taken. In that case at the time of Sandhya the Sadhaka performs the Yaugika or some other form of mental bath. A Yoga initiate may, according to his Guru's instructions, bathe in the Muktatriveri (in the region of the Ajna) or Yuktatriveni (in the Muladhara) the Pushkaratirtha (in Anahata) or Bindutirtha (in the region of the Ajna Chakra).

ARTHUR AVALON.

THE SELF-IMPOSED STRUGGLE*

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

SINCE the dawn of human intelligence, man has felt himself limited, bound and handicapped. Yet there has been always the struggle to peep beyond, to transcend the limited mind and intellect. Man could never remain satisfied with the finite and limited knowledge. Man could never be at peace and rest contented while conscious of his imperfections. There is ever the struggle in every human heart to go beyond all imperfections and become free, perfect and divine even as the Father in Heaven is free and perfect.

What do we mean by religion ? Is it merely subscribing to a faith, or a creed, or a dogma ? Has it to be kept apart from our daily life-struggles and kept for Sundays in the Churches ? Is it something to be bought from the parties ? No sane, intelligent person will ever subscribe to such a view of religion.

What is it then ? Religion is realization—this is the universally accepted definition of religion. But then what is realization ? Is it having visions of ghosts and of departed spirits ? Is it the attainment of certain supernatural powers that will help us to enjoy the worldly and material pleasures more and more ? Often we find, in this country especially, religion has been identified with all sorts of hobgoblins and associated with so-called mysticism seeking the power and mastery over external nature that may enable us to live a greatly expanded life of enjoyment on this planet of ours. We may get thereby perhaps a little more freedom, a little more enjoyment ; but true religion does not stop there.

Those of you who have read the beautiful story of Nachiketas in the Kathopanishad know that when the young boy Nachiketa approached the King of Death, Yama offered him any boon he might like—longer life, stronger and keener powers of sensual enjoyments, beautiful young damsels, the wealth of a king—any conceivable gift. But the young Nachiketas refused to be tempted by these proffered boons, refused to accept them, saying howsoever longer the life he might be granted, it is but too short in comparison with the

*A Lecture delivered at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, U. S. A.

eternal life ; howsoever stronger the powers of senses he might get. they must weaken in course of time. None of these lasts for ever. He wanted that knowledge and that knowledge alone which could give him eternal freedom and everlasting bliss. Nothing short of that. And that is the ideal of religion—Freedom, eternal freedom.

The tendency of the modern mind is to materialize even spirituality. We want to drag God down to become our servant and supply us with physical health, every material prosperity and enjoyment, never for a moment thinking that the inevitable end of all these is death and destruction. They cannot give us the complete cessation of miseries. They cannot satisfy the cravings of our heart ultimately.

There are two phrases : '*Idealizing the real*' and '*Realizing the Ideal*.' The modern mind seeks to idealize the real, 'to cover with golden leaf the sore in the body,' as Swami Vivekananda used to say. The modern mind seeks to achieve more and more and to intensify the apparently real enjoyments of the world. But true religion seeks to *realize the Ideal* which is beyond the domain of the senses and matter.

It is not that we should not have health and prosperity ; but let us not forget that these are the means to an end.

I have already hinted that there are two sides of a man.... the human and the divine. He feels himself limited and bound and, on the other hand, he thirsts for the Infinite Freedom. And that is the struggle of life. Two sorts of people do not feel the bondage or the urge within to gain freedom. These are the God-men and the brute-men. God-men do not feel this inner urge because they have achieved the Supreme Goal, because they have already attained the Infinite Freedom and have become one with the Infinite and the Absolute. And brute-men do not feel the urge within because they can remain satisfied with the little, finite things of the world ; they have become so much used to darkness that they cannot bear the light of day. They have not yet sufficiently developed themselves in the scale of evolution to feel the urge within. When we feel our slavery, our bondage, then comes the urge to struggle for freedom. And religious life begins when we are conscious of this urge within.

Every religion admits that there is such a thing as salvation, o. freedom, and also that man as he is naturally is limited and bound. But religions differ in the explanations and the

methods of attainment. Some satisfy our reason and others do not.

The Christian belief is that the soul is born sinful and imperfect, inheriting sin as its birth-right. All the different Christian sects accept the account of creation as given in Genesis. God made the first man Adam in His own image. But there appeared Satan, who sowed the seed of evil in Adam's soul. The seed grew into a tree which bore evil fruit, and there spread, as a result of that poisonous tree disease, suffering and death. The first man had to die, but with his death, the tree of evil did not die, but spread its branches all over the world. From generation to generation the sin of the first man had been inherited. When, as its consequence, the whole world suffered from disease and death, the all-merciful Father in Heaven, to show His love for humanity, sent His only begotten son, Jesus, to bear the burden of that sin and redeem humanity. But though Jesus the Christ came and lived and sacrificed himself to redeem the sin of suffering humanity, the Christians assert and believe that only those who believe in Christ as their Redeemer will be saved, and they want to send others to the other side.

These ideas of sin and salvation may bring solace and comfort to some. We do not wish to disturb their settled convictions and beliefs and we have not the heart to unsettle the faith of those who do not ask further. But there are many others who cannot unquestioningly accept anything upon hearsay or believe anything because it is written in some book. They want to satisfy their reason. They discover that these ideas as preached by the unenlightened priests and theologians of Christendom are illogical absurdities. If God is infinite and all-pervading, where is there any room for Satan? If God is all-merciful and all-powerful, why did He not prevent Adam from tasting of the fruit of the tree of evil.

So long as we believe in the special creation of man at a particular time, in his temptation and fall, and so long as we believe that the sin of our fathers can be inherited like a piece of property, so long do we have to believe in the vicarious atonement and in Christ as our Savior. But modern science has disproved the creation of man at some particular time. The fact of evolution has disproved once for all that such a man existed ten thousand years ago and the fall of Adam was perhaps four thousand years later. So we can no longer accept the account of creation as given in Genesis.

The fact is that we could never inherit sin from our parents. Did our parents create our souls ? Is this our first and last existence ? Christ says, " Before Abraham was I am ." It is so with each individual soul. Every soul existed before Abraham was and will exist for eternity. The fact is that we are living in delusion, committing mistakes and reaping the results of our own actions.

Then, again, if the innate nature of our souls is sinful, it could never be changed. Did you ever see the innate nature of anything change without destroying the substance itself ? Did you ever see fire existing without its innate nature heat ? Similarly, if we accept our innate nature as sinful, salvation would mean annihilation. Set aside the notion that you are born sinners. Do not any longer delude yourselves with such superstitious, illogical beliefs. Christ never taught such ideas. Moreover, thought has a tremendous power. " What thou thinkest, thou shalt become "—is the saying of all sages. If you think you are a sinner, sinner you will be. If you think you are diseased, diseased you will be. Do not dwell on such weakening, negative thoughts. Is not God the Infinite, Allpervading spirit ? Does He not dwell in every human heart as the soul of man ? Can the Infinite spirit ever be contaminated by anything ? If our souls are parts of the same Infinite spirit, how could these be contaminated ? " Ye Children of Immortal Bliss "—that is the call of the Vedic sages. The Soul that dwells in every heart is divine. One question arises, " If we are divine, why are we not conscious of our divine nature ? Why do we feel ourselves limited and imperfect ? " The reply is, it is our ignorance, our wrong understanding that causes all delusion. We mistake the body for the soul, and the soul for the body. We mistake matter for the spirit, and the spirit for the matter. But as the rope remains a rope all the time, howsoever through our misunderstanding we may take it as a snake, similarly any amount of ignorance or wrong understanding cannot change the divine nature of our soul. It is compared to the self-effulgent sun. Clouds may cover the sun from our sight, still it does not stop giving light. Our minds are covered with the clouds of ignorance, and hence the soul, though divine, does not reflect there properly and appears as though limited, as though imperfect. This appearance of the Divine Perfect soul as a limited and imperfect may be said to be the fall of Adam. Satan is ignorance. Through the magic power of

Satan, ignorance, the Eve or Buddhi, or understanding, is overpowered, Adam, or the divine nature, associating with Buddhi, thinks himself limited and imperfect. Our faith in Christ, in the Atman within, can save us from our imperfections. This is the real teaching of Christ. The divine personalities, such as Krishna, Christ or Buddha, are called the saviors of the world, because they have shown by their life-example how to unfold the divinity within. The real savior is the Atman within. None can save us unless we ourselves struggle within, unless we are ready to apply the teachings. How many people could Jesus, the great savior of the world, save during his lifetime? Consider what a small number of disciples he made. It was because he could save only those who were ready for his teachings. That is why it is said in the Gita, "The Self has to be saved by the self." The self is his own friend and the self is his own enemy." We have to struggle ourselves.

But through our lethargy and ignorance we want an easy religion, so that we may not have to exert ourselves; and Christ, or Krishna, some *Mahatma* or spirit, will keep us from the other side and we will be saved miraculously.

Never have happened such cases! Christ says, "know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Yes, we have to know the truth, we have to realize the Atman, and then only do we become free.

This truth is not to be found in temples, or churches, or mosques. "Seek and Ye shall find." You have to find it within yourself. External help is necessary, the external teacher is needed, but only to rouse that spirit of struggle within, to show us the path to God-consciousness.

In conclusion, I would ask you to have *Shraddha*, intense faith in yourselves. You have been used to hearing so much about your weaknesses and sins; that is why you have not been able to attain much in the spiritual field of knowledge. Set aside all such superstitious beliefs that you are weak, that you are sinful. On the other hand, try to bring out the intense faith in yourselves, the faith that your innate nature is divine, the faith that it lies in your power to manifest that divinity if you only struggle. This faith in the self is not overweening pride or self-assertion; on the contrary, faith in yourself will give you faith in all humanity. For is not the same spirit dwelling in every heart?

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA.

A POEM
(*Hitherto Unpublished*).

14th August 1900
6, Place Des Etats Unis,
PARIS, FRANCE.

Dear C.,

I send you a little poem. I am well—and must remain well through. It does not pay to be weak.

I hope you are well and happy.

VIVEKANANDA.

IF things go ill or well
If joy rebounding spreads the face
Or sea of sorrow swells,
It is a dream, a play.
A play we each have part,
Each one to weep or laugh as may,
Each one his dress to don
Alternate shine or rain.

Thou dream, O blessed dream !
Spread far and near thy veil of haze,
Tone down the lines so sharp,
Make smooth what roughness seems.
No Magic but in thee,
Thy touch makes desert bloom to life ;
Harsh thunder sweetest song,
Fell death the sweet release.

THE COMING OF A NEW WORLD-ORDER

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

ONE of the most outstanding facts in the present history of mankind is a world-wide revolt against the established order of things. People have come to call in question all forms of social iniquity which their ancestors accepted as a dispensation of God. And naturally they refuse now to move on blindly "in the way their forefathers have gone." A deep unrest has been raging in the soul of the main bulk of humanity, called the lower classes in our social phrasology, ever since the neolithic men of the anthropologist settled down as members of their primitive society dominated by the powerful heads of their small family tribes. The rudimentary social organisms have developed into mighty kingdoms, empires and republics, but the fate of the common people has not materially changed for the better. Nay, in this age of "inhuman industrialism and gulttonous plutocracy, the enslaving cult of the machine and an economic materialism where the soul dies of suffocation," as Romain Rolland describes it, the sufferings of the subjected communities have in some respects become more unbearable than ever. The seething discontent locked up in the human heart for ages is now finding new expressions in mighty political struggles, social revolutions and economic upheavals threatening the very existence of the human society itself.

The industrial revolution inaugurated in the Nineteenth Century has centralised wealth in the hands of the manufacturing class, generally known as the Capitalist. It has brought into being gigantic mills, factories and mines, huge industrial cities and commercial towns undreamt of in the past. It has created a vast wage-earning class, in place of the slaves and gang labourers of the ancient days. This revolution has no doubt bred untold evils in various spheres of life. But it is not without its redeeming features. And the most remarkable of them is that it has made labour conscious of its power, with the result that the labouring classes have now come to possess in the regulation of human affairs a voice which can no longer be set aside with impunity. The mechanical revolution, which greatly helped the development of the industrial revolution, has produced many horrors. But in spite of all these, it has succeeded in spreading education among the com-

men toiling masses, the majority of whom lived and died in the past as mere mechanical drudges. Knowledge is Power. And with the acquisition of this knowledge, and the consequent break-down of the barrier of culture that separated the different communities in society, labour is becoming a power in every land. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia, the Labour Ministry in England, the powerful labour organisations possessing a regulative voice in the governments of many other countries—all these unmistakably point to a great change in human society. No doubt some of these so-called democratic movements are still swayed by aristocratic and middle class traditions. But still they bid fair to end to some extent the slavery and degradation of the masses subjected for ages by the so-called upper classes exploiting their labour.

Not one of them has as yet realised the high ideal as set out by the great Italian prophet, Mazzini,—“God and His Law, Humanity and its Work of Interpretation, Progress, Association, Liberty, Equality ;—these, with that dogma of the People, which is the vital principle of the Republican Party, are all united in our belief.”

Broadly speaking every human society is made up of the priest, the military, the merchant and the labourer. The world already saw the ascendancy of the first three classes. All the past governments had one common trait. Built as they were upon the exploitation of the teeming millions, they were all characterised by the oppression of the poor. They were but different stages in the evolution of human society. In the first stage, the priest wielded the paramount power. His theocratic government was built on his intellectual strength and on his divine authority, real or supposed. As he lost his supremacy, he became superseded by the royal power supported by military strength. The learning and culture centralised in the previous regime were more widely disseminated during this period. This is the special feature of the monarchical form of government. But autocracy too, has practically passed away with most of its Czars, Kaisers and Emperors. And the few monarchies that still exist on the face of the earth are constitutional governments, or properly speaking, they are more or less aristocratic and capitalistic “crowned” republics. As the king lost his supremacy, the commercial and the middle classes stepped in, sometimes without their knowledge, to hold in their hand the destinies of nations. These classes impelled by the desire of exploitation and aggres-

sion spread their commercial enterprises to all unexplored and unexploited lands and still dominate the world to-day. This period has been marked by the plunder and subjection of alien races, and even by the extermination of aboriginal tribes and destruction of primitive civilizations. It fills, in the words of the distinguished anthropologist, Dr. Waltz, "unquestionably one of the darkest pages of human history." But it cannot be called an unmixed evil, for it is during this age that the knowledge and culture of all nations have been propagated broadcast, and these are sure to prove to be of far-reaching results.

Throughout the period of industrial revolution there has been going on an unrestricted exploitation, and as its result, terrible sufferings of the poor. But the lash of misery awakened and is still awakening the down-trodden in every land. The French Revolution and the Russian Revolution were but two remarkable instances of the self-assertion of the common people eager to emancipate themselves from age-long slavery. Whatever may be their excesses, these revolutionary movements were brought about with a view to establish a new order in society, at least in so far as the labouring classes were concerned. These bloody revolutions were provoked by the inhuman oppression of kings and aristocrats. In some other countries the people partly achieved their object through more peaceful methods, but there is no doubt that they were never driven to desperation by the relentless tyranny of the governing classes.

With the coming of the people to power, an age of equality is slowly dawning upon the world. Humanity has seen till now many forms of the so-called popular governments. The ancient village community of India with its Council of Five afforded "a better defence against the vile tyranny of an overgrown militarism than any yet discovered in Europe or in Asia," as Mr. E. B. Havell puts it in his "Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India." It safeguarded the economic stability of the country even in the midst of devastating invasions by foreigners. The franchise was no doubt of intellect and not of wealth and military power, but in it the Sudras were relegated to an inferior position. The much-vaunted city-state of ancient Greece was not strictly speaking a government by the Demos, but by the citizens only, from which "the helots, the freeman and the outlander" were scrupulously excluded. In spite of its greatness, the Roman

Republic too, with its Senate or Popular Assemblies was narrow in its outlook, and was tainted by slavery. The *populi* of *vox populi, vox Dei* even virtually excluded the vast majority of the Roman citizens who lived outside the confines of the city and were pre-occupied with agricultural pursuits. The democracies and republic of modern times, although they have a wider electorate, are dominated by the aristocrat and the politician who generally comes from the upper middle class.

The realization of the ideal state,—not that of Plato's Republic, but that "in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial and the ideal of equality of the last can all be kept intact, minus their evils"—is still a far-off dream. The present political world is still marked by the apotheosis of the vague phantoms of the "Powers" which have taken the place of the tribal gods of the ancients. Very truly does Mr. H. G. Wells observe in his "Outline of History"—"European life remained nominally Christian, but to worship one God in spirit and in truth is to belong to one community with all one's fellow-worshippers. In practical reality Europe does not do this, she has given herself up altogether to the worship of this strange state of mythology. To these sovereign deities she has sacrificed many generations of possible unity, peace, and prosperity and the lives of millions of men." But this worship of the elusive entities is but an accidental phase in the history of mankind. Like its predecessors, the present form of democracy is not the final word of world-polity. It, too, will pass away. It is only the forerunner of an era of greater equality, in which no particular class but all classes will join hands with one another to establish a universal kingdom of righteousness. The ideal world-state can be never possibly fulfilled in our world of relativity. But even if it is partially realised, it will bring a millennium on earth. Notwithstanding their many curses, the mechanical and industrial revolutions and the craze for world-hegemony that followed them have conferred one great blessing on humanity. They have unconsciously helped in bringing home to mankind the idea of a world-state and of the solidarity of man. The half-gods are fast passing away to make room not for the jealous God who is believed to enter into covenants with any chosen people to the exclusion of the rest, but the true God—the God of all nations. The reign of Law and Justice will follow in time.

The conceptions of humanity and internationalism are appealing more and more to an ever-increasing number of thoughtful men and women in all countries. The ideals of Love, Harmony and Brotherhood have been lived and preached by the greatest prophets and saints of the world. But unfortunately these were realised till now in the lives of only a few individuals here and there. The world as a whole was never prepared to receive them. But terrible catastrophes and sufferings are slowly bringing mankind to its senses, and are tending to awaken the Divine within. Science with its conquest of natural forces and the consequent increase in the facility of communication, has now come to the service of Religion. The railway and the steamship, the telegraph and the telephone, the aeroplane and the wireless, the press and the platform are bringing into close contact men and women peopling the farthest corners of the globe. This much-desired association of peoples of diverse religions and cultures, dogmas and traditions is widening the bounds of human knowledge and outlook, and is preparing the way for the unification of the world on the solid basis of spiritual ideals. Individuals and communities are coming to recognise that the civilisations and cultures of the different peoples of the earth are but different chapters to the history of the entire human race. They are commencing to claim as their birthright not only the heritage of their narrow nationalities, but the accumulated knowledge of the different branches of the great human family. The foundations of a universal religion are being laid on earth. A new humanity is arising, as Swami Vivekananda saw with his unerring vision, "out of the peasant's cottage holding the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper ; from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-setter ; from the factory, from marts, and from markets ; from groves and forests, from hills and mountains." At the dawn of this new age it behoves us to render our humble services to the God manifested in humanity, and pray with the Swami—"Our salutations go to all the past prophets, whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race and clime ; our salutations go to all those men and women, God-like, who are working to help humanity, whatever be their race, colour or birth. Our salutations to those who are coming in the future, living gods, to work unselfishly for our descendants."

SWAMI BODHANANDA.

"For the Good of the many for the happiness of the many is the sannyasin born."

The monk of ancient days travelled from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin and spread the light of knowledge throughout the length and breadth of Bharatavarsha. India was for him the whole world. The monk of today has a larger responsibility. The whole world claims his attention and he has to carry the light of knowledge to the four corners of the earth. Since the days of Bhagavan Buddha, it was the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, that unrolled the flag of Hindu religion in foreign lands. The missionary zeal has been entirely absent from Hinduism as a religion. Swamiji made Hinduism dynamic and aggressive, by proclaiming to the proud West the superiority of the religious life of India. He realized that if India is to live it must never allow the smouldering embers of the religious consciousness that forms the basic principle of her national life, to be extinguished. And the best way of doing it was to raise up the status of India in the eyes of the world by making the West realise, that India has to give to the world something permanent. However much crippled and humbled India may appear at present, the Western nations to save themselves from utter destruction have to learn from India the true philosophy of life and the path to realise it. On the other hand, to increase the vitality of Indian national life India must grow and the growth can only be achieved if she attempts to give out the great secret of her existence to the world at large. She has to grow out of her narrow and orthodox, at present degenerated forms of life and aim at expansion—an expansion not through the help of gunpowder and bombs, but through the overpowering force of *her* culture which the world is so badly in want of now.

To fulfil this great work of bringing out a new international order where East and West would mutually help each other, the great Swami Vivekananda began his work in America and India at the same time. He wanted the West to accept the Vedantic conception of life and so started centres there in America to teach the people this new gospel of life. After his success in the Parliament of Religions, he began re-

gular preaching work and in the year 1894 he organised a Vedanta society in New York and it is in connection with the work of this society we have to introduce to the reader the subject of this sketch. Our reader is already aware that Swami Bodhanandaji, of the New York Vedanta society after a period of eighteen years of work has come to India to take a few months of much needed rest in his mother land which he had left almost two decades back. We hope to give in these few pages a short sketch of the swami's career and his work in America.

Haripada Chatterjea for such was the swami's name before he entered the order, was born in the year 1871 in the district of Hoogly in Bengal. He belonged to an orthodox Brahmin family. Having finished his early education, he came to Calcutta for his higher education and he graduated from the Calcutta University. It will be interesting to the reader to know how he came into contact with this great movement that has come into existence, since the advent of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. As a college student he with some other young men filled with high idealism, had formed themselves into a society which used to meet in the houses of friends and discuss between themselves topics of common interest. This band of young men would often go to nurse the sick, reclaim people who had fallen into bad ways achieving this by moral persuasion and love. Some of the members of this society afterwards renounced the world and became monks of the order of Sri Ramakrishna. Most of them had heard the name of Sri Ramakrishna, but they had neither seen him nor come under the influence of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. So practically they were ignorant of that circle of influence that was growing into a mighty wave in Calcutta, after the passing of Sri Ramakrishna. Fortunately for Haripad Chatterjea, it fell to his lot to know who was Sri Ramakrishna and what he had come to the world for and then Haripada's friends of the society came to know of this great secret that was to change the very course of their lives. It came to pass thus. Sri Ramakrishna had a house-holder devotee named Ram Chandra Dutt. At Kakurgachi near Calcutta, he had built a Samadhi Mandir of his master and there every year he used to celebrate the birthday anniversary of the Master. Hearing of that year's celebration Haripada Chatterjee walked all the distance from Calcutta to Kakurgachi where he met Ram Babu. He introduced

himself to him and soon the devotee with all the admiration he could command towards his Master began to impress on the young mind of the student the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna, whom he described to him as nothing short of an Avatar. The devotion of Ram Babu and the story of his conversion produced a great impression on the young mind. Haripada went back and informed his friends about the visit to Kakurgachi. They all became very jubilant and that night they passed in such exultation and joy, for they had known that day that Sri Ramakrishna was an Avatar ! The young enthusiasts next day collected some money and with that bought some sweets. They took these to Kakurgachi on the Thithi Pooja day. The friends were introduced to Ram Babu and they heard many interesting details of the life of Sri Ramakrishna.

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Not very long afterwards these young souls came under the influence of another personality. This was our illustrious M. (Mahendra Nath Gupta---the author of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.) He was then a professor in the Rippon College where these students were studying. Mahendra Nath Gupta it was, that told them about the Sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who were then living in a small house, unrecognised and unknown by the world. He took them to the Baranagore monastery, the first settlement of that little band of young men who had renounced hearth and home to realise in their very life that ideal of renunciation, they had seen in its perfection in their master. They had incorporated literally in their lives what Sri Ramakrishna actually was. The many-sided facets of his personality were represented collectively by this holy Sangham. So what wonder is there that when any one with an inward turn of mind approached them, his life was literally transformed by their company and influence. Blessed are the souls who were fortunate to come within the zone of this mighty spiritual ring that was destined ere long to encircle the whole globe. Haripada with his friends Sushil, Kalikrishna, Sukul, Khaghen, and Sudhir who were known laterly as Prakashananda, Virajananda, Atmananda, Vimalananda, and Sudhananda, began to frequent the monastery very often. The swamies began to like them for their earnestness. They were allowed the little privileges of doing them some personal services. The life of the monks had already begun to tell upon the young minds. Although they had known these monks who had already dazzled their eyes, by the brilliance of their spiritual life they

had not yet met that towering personality who was the centre of this brilliant constellation. Swami Vivekananda was then in America. So until 1897 they could not see him. When the Swamiji returned from America, we can imagine the feeling of these young men, who were on the tip-toe of expectation to be introduced to Swamiji and be accepted by him. Haripada who was then a teacher came to see Swamiji who received him very kindly. He soon resigned his appointment and joined the monastic order and was blessed with sannyas by Swamiji in the year 1899. He was given the new name Swami Bodhananda.

The year that followed from 1898 down to 1902, the year of the passing away of the great Swamiji were days of momentous importance in the shaping of the disciple's life. Swami Bodhanandaji shared with the other young swamies the privilege of enjoying the company of the great Swamiji. Swamiji wanted them all to be made men of character and the education he gave them was to bring out their latent possibilities by presenting to them all the favourable environments for their spiritual development. The monastery was to them a university centre where they learnt not only to worship, meditate and study but also learnt to use their hands and feet in the service of their fellow men. That spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to humanity which made many of them go to the different parts of India and abroad for the *Seva* of mankind they imbibed by their constant contact with their teacher. When swamiji returned back from America after his second and last visit to that country, Swami Bodhanandaji met him at Benares. He was during this period leading the life of a Sadhu in the orthodox fashion at Hrishikesh, living in small tents and begging his food by Biksha. At Benares Swamiji wanted him to take charge of the work there. When he found his young disciple's delicacy to shoulder this responsibility Swamiji spoke to him a few words which have ever since rung in his ears. "I ask you to lead the life and work in your own natural way. Do not imitate at others. Work in your own sincere way and success will be surely yours" We trust that the great success of Swami Bodhanandaji in America was purely due to his having understood this secret of success which his guru had taught him.

Swami Bodhanandaji had not to take up this work in Benares. He came back to Belur and was engaged there in

various responsible offices. In 1902 Swamiji passed away. For the next few years Swami Bodhanandaji was in the head quarters. When the illustrious Swami Brhmanandaji was bed-ridden with typhoid for some months, Swami Bodhanandaji was one of his unfailing and faithful attendants that nursed him through his illness. In 1905 the Swami started for a pilgrimage and seeing various places of interest he came to Madras and from there proceeded to take charge of the work of the Vedanta Society of Bangalore and was there for fourteen months. There the swami used to take regular classes and deliver lectures to the public.

It was during this time Swami Brhmanandaji requested him to proceed to America for Vedantic work in that country. His respect for Swami Brhmanandaji knew no bounds. He understood that the order for him came high from above and though conscious of his limitation he made bold to accept the offer. In 1906 he sailed for America. He worked in company with Swami Abhedanandaji for some time and afterwards he was sent to take charge of Vedantic work in Pittsburgh where he remained from 1907 to 1913. He next came back to New York and accepted the charge of the work there. The Vedanta society had no permanent home there and its financial condition too was not very encouraging. Almost every couple of years the swami had to shift from one lodging to another. Seeing this difficulty one of the students of the swami Miss Mary Morton the daughter of one of the Vice-presidents of U. S. A. came forward with a magnificent donation of 40 thousand dollars and with this a nice six-storied building in one of the most respectable quarters of New York was purchased. In 1921 the Vedanta society shifted to its permanent home,, thanks to the devotion of the great benefactress who made this possible. The Swami used to deliver every Sunday one public lecture and on other two days he used to give his students practical lessons in Yoga practice. His classes were well attended as the secret of the swami's success as we once told our readers was that he had attempted to live the life of a true sadhu in the very heart of New York. He had explained to the eager souls who had come in contact with him the great truths of religion in a simple, unostentatious manner, doing his work in his own way. He stamped the work with his own individuality. People who have really come under his influence have stood by him for ever and ever. They have known the force of character behind

his personality and this has made it possible for him to turn the eyes of many worldly ridden souls to the eternal truth of religion. As the work has expanded the swami called for another worker from India. Our readers know that Swami Raghavanandaji who had been for some time the editor of our contemporary Prabhuddha Bharata here, has gone over to New York to assist the swami. Having got an assistant Swami Bodhanandaji got some respite from work and so he sailed for India last October. The Swami was given a very cordial reception as he landed by the public of Bombay.

He spent a week in our Bombay centre and delivered some public lectures which were well appreciated by the people. He went to Belur and was received there with great love by the monks of the Mutt. The swami was given a public reception and was presented with an address by the public of Calcutta to which he made a suitable reply. After witnessing the celebration of Swamiji's birthday and Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, the swami went to Benares, Patna and visited our centres there. In all these places he delivered public lectures and interested the people in Vedantic philosophy and religion. He had also been to Rangoon where he was very cordially received by the public. The swami was immensely pleased to see the grand and undreamt of proportions the work of the Mission has grown into and it fills his heart with not a little amount of joy to imagine the grand prospect of this work which has been inaugurated by his Master only the other day in his memory. The presence of the swami in our midst has been a great impetus to the workers here. He has infused into us a freshness and joy, that has made many of us proud of the thought that we belong to this era of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and the conviction that on this lever of the Mission of the Master the world is being lifted up from its present degraded state to a new haven of peace and rest.

On the eve of his departure to America, we offer him our salutations, with the prayer that ere long he would return to us so that his presence with us would be a blessing and inspiration to all here.



GLEANINGS.

THE PASSING OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

When Sri Ramakrishna gave up His body did He feel any pain? On the contrary I think that was the most blissful moment of His life, for there was horripilation all over His body. I myself saw it. Every hair stood up on end. He never lost His cheerfulness. He used to say that He was all well and happy, only there was a little something here (pointing to the throat).

On that last night He was talking with us to the very last. For supper He had drunk a whole half glass of *paysam* (gruel) and seemed to relish it. There was no doubt a little heat in the body, so He asked us to fan Him and some ten of us were all fanning at once. He was sitting up against some five or six pillows which were supported by my body and at the same time I too was fanning. This made a slight motion in the body and twice He asked me : "Why are you shaking?" As if His mind were so fixed and steady that He could perceive the least motion. Swamiji Vivekananda took His feet and began to rub them and Sri Ramakrishna was talking to him, telling what he must do. "Take care of these boys," He repeated again and again, as if He were putting them in his charge. Then He asked to lie down. Suddenly, at one o'clock He fell towards one side, there was a hoarse sound in the throat and I saw all the hairs stand on end. Swamiji quickly laid His feet on a quilt and ran downstairs as if he could not bear it. A doctor, who was a great devotee and who was feeling His pulse, saw that it had stopped and began to weep aloud. "What are you doing, you fool?" I asked, meaning that he was acting as if Sri Ramakrishna had really left us. We all believed that it was only *Samadhi*, so Swamiji came back, and we all sat down, some twenty of us, and began repeating, "Hari Om ! Hari Om !" all together. So we waited until between one or two the next day. Still the body had some heat in it, especially about the back, but the doctor insisted that the soul had left the body and about five it had grown cold, so we placed it on a very beautifully decorated cot and carried it to the cremation ground.

I remember every incident of that last day. He seemed very well and cheerful. In the afternoon He talked for fully two hours to a gentleman who had come to put Him some question about Yoga. A little later I ran some seven miles to bring the doctor. When I reached his house, he was not there, but I was told that he was at a certain house. So I ran another mile and I met him on the way. He did not want to come but I dragged him away just the same. He gave Sri Ramakrishna some medicine saying : "I am sure this will cure you," and

Sri Ramakrishna scolded His Mother a little saying, "How long shall I have to take this Uchistam?"

We all thought He was very well because He ate so much more supper than usual, and He said nothing of going. In the afternoon He had asked Yogin* to look in the almanac and see whether it was an auspicious day. Also He had been telling us for some time that the vessel which was floating in the ocean was already twothirds full of water, soon the rest would fill up and it would plunge into the ocean. But we did not believe that He was really going. (Message of the East.)

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

DEAN INGE writing in the *Morning Post* says :—

Dean Inge Writing in the *Morning Post* says :—

A few years ago Professor Aliotta, of Padua, published an excellent book which may be read in English, called the "Idealistic Reaction against Science." Those who have not followed the course of modern philosophy may be surprised to hear that there is such a reaction.

But so it is.

The exaggerated rationalism of the last century, which threatened to enthrone materialism as the only tenable view of the universe, and to regard man as only the most cunning of nature's clocks, has provoked a vigorous revolt.

This revolt was assisted by dissensions within the ranks of Science itself. There had been disputes before ; the geologists wanted much more time for the life of the earth than the physicists, before the discovery of the radio activity, were willing to allow them. But it marked a more radical change when biology declared that mechanical laws were insufficient to explain the phenomena of life and when psychology began to claim a greater independence of physics. At once there began hue and cry against the naturalistic interpretation of reality. Agnosticism. Voluntarism, the Primacy of Practical Reason, Anglo-American Pragmatism, Activism, Bergsonianism, are all names of theories of knowledge which assail the rationalist's presentation of reality.

Encouraged by them, all manner of discarded superstitions, scotched but not killed in the last century, have again raised their heads and walk abroad unabashed. Theosophy, occultism, magic, spiritualism, necromancy, miracle-working, are enjoying a popularity and vogue which none, fifty years ago, would have thought possible.

And yet Science goes on its way unconcerned by these attacks. The study of natural law is the one obviously progressive branch of intellectual activity. In other subjects we hear laments that there is a dearth

*Swami Yogananda one of the prominent Sanyasin disciple of the Master.

of genius and originality ; but in physics and biology new discoveries are made every year, and researches are animated by a spirit of romance and adventure, as if nothing were impossible within their domain. Whatever objections may be brought by philosophers against naturalism as an interpretation of the universe, within its chosen province it indisputably works.

This being so we can hardly doubt that the reaction of which Aliotta speaks is transitory if not superficial. The revelation which has come to our age has come through Science rather than through metaphysics or art or religion. The uniformity of nature, and the continuity of natural law, are the hypothesis which the modern world for the most part takes for granted. The old supernaturalistic dualism has almost disappeared from its last refuge, theology.

We think in terms of evolution, though that doctrine was partially discredited by being harnessed to a pseudo-philosophy of progress, a legacy of French revolutionary thought. The Utopias projected by imaginative writers of to-day are scientific Utopias in which disease and poverty have been banished, the burden of drudgery lightened and in which new sources of wealth have been tapped.

It is in politics that the influence of Science is least felt. Its students are numerically a feeble folk, unable to impress themselves on the masses who now direct a nation's policy ; and though modern democracy does not threaten to guillotine our Lavoisiers, ' having no need of chemists, it is far from wishing to seek their advice.

And so the whole outlook of the man of science is perhaps further removed from what are considered practical politics than that of any other class. It is true that in what will one day be the most important branch of social science, eugenis the experts are not in a hurry to advocate legislation—they recognize that their results are still too tentative ; but it is ominous that the general public dislikes the study of heredity on quite other grounds than its slow progress. Antiscientific prejudice is a force with which we have to reckon seriously. Whether modern civilization will be saved or destroyed by Science is still uncertain. Science has not only abolished the chivalry of war ; it has taught the belligerents to use devices which even twenty years ago would have been thought inconceivably barbarous. And far more destructive discoveries are probable.

There is, perhaps, a faint hope that the ruinousness of any future war may prevent its occurrence ; but it is a faint hope ; fear has caused far more wars than it has prevented. On the other side, we have visions of synthetic foods, of the tides harnessed in our service, and of distance almost abolished by new modes of communications and transit. The world has been more changed in the last hundred years than in the

two thousand years which went before. What will be its condition in 2000 ?

Science, then, has the future of humanity in its hands. And yet we must remember that Science cannot provide us with a religion or a philosophy. Reality is best regarded as a kingdom of values, and modern thinkers are agreed in enumerating three ultimate values, each standing in its own right, and refusing to be made a means to any other—namely, Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The world as known to science is not really put together out of the electrons in motion, which are the last term of the analysis of matter. The mind brings far more to the construction than is usually realized.

The conception of natural law—the universality of a single harmonious principle—is the value which the man of science seeks to justify by his researches. But the other supreme values Beauty and Goodness, have equal claims upon us; and Science, for her own purposes, disregards the æsthetic and the religious demands of human nature. We therefore need a philosophy which will do justice to Art and Religion as well as to Science.

The old dogmatic materialism, even when disguised as 'epiphenomenalism,' is out of date. And equally out of date is the agnosticism which asserts that we can know phenomena, but not the things of the spirit. Those who suppose there is anything more solidly real than the objects of the religious consciousness know not what they say.

The difficulties caused by this triple revelation of the Eternal, as Truth, Beauty and Goodness, can never be wholly solved. Science is now free from alien control, and can develop itself, as it is doing, with exultant confidence. But while the guidance of civilization passes more and more into its hands, it must remember its self-chosen limitations, and learn from philosophy that the deepest questions are qualitative rather than quantitative—in other words, that ultimate reality is spiritual.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

The Editor, Vedanta Kesari.

Dear Sir,

It is my privilege to send you the report of the Birthday Celebration of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna at the Hindu Temple of San Francisco.

Each year it has been a day of great blessedness, a day to look forward with joy, but on this March 9th, 1924, it seemed a new experience, a greater blessing, a larger understanding of the rare privilege we were enjoying.

Though we had not the opportunity of feeding the multitude as you do in India, the Swamis fed our hungry hearts with the bread of living truth as they fell from the Master's lips.

* * * * *

The morning service opened with a harmony of Sanskrit chants by Mrs. T. J. Allan and Mrs. L. Burnham, led and supported by Swami Prakashananda. Every one present liked the Swami's original way of chanting which lent solemnity to the occasion. Then followed a short meditation with prayer by the Swami and a song by Mrs. Allan translated from the Bengali.

The Swami chose "Sri Ramakrishna's Message to the World" as his subject for the morning discourse and gave us an inspiring message. He said in part :

It is our privilege to-day to celebrate the memory of one of the greatest Incarnations of the world. Great doubts have been raised in regards to the historicity of the great Messengers of Light, but the life of Sri Ramakrishna has thrown a wonderful light on the lives of such God-men as Buddha, Jesus and other great teachers and prophets of the past.

Many a soul inebriated with the love of God has blessed this planet of ours, but the study of Sri Ramakrishna's life reveals that His was a unique life. Others came to lay stress on one side of spiritual unfoldment, while His message was so broad and universal that it was meant for the whole human race.

We come across with the message of harmony in the oldest of the Vedas "Truth is one, sages call it variously." But the ideal remained there only in seed form, until Sri Krishna preached "Whosoever comes

to me in whatever way, I reach him." Sri Krishna made the seed grow, as it were, into a plant and it was left for Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Prophet of the modern age, to grow this plant into a big tree, spreading its branches in all directions giving shelter and help to votaries of all faiths and religions.

Looking back through the world's history we find these Great Souls appear when material culture sweeps over the land, when man forgets that he is a Child of God and is filled with doubts regarding religion.

The word "Religion" comes from "Ligo" to bind, that which binds us, holds us. True religion is realization. It is not merely listening to a sermon and go out and take up the same life, the same mode of living and thinking, but religion should raise our consciousness until we become one with God, which is the only Reality in life. This the Master proved by His own life example.

When Swami Vivekananda came to Sri Ramakrishna and had asked the question "Have you seen God," the Master answered—"Yes, my son, in a more real way than I see you." And that is Religion. We have to see God, we have to come face to face with the Truth, and it is no wonder that from the depths of our hearts, adoration goes forth to such God-men.

We need concrete examples, need the inspiration of such living Gods. They are a blessed relief from the ordinary life of eating, sleeping and talking nonsense.

He lived that divine life in constant communion with the Divine Spirit in various aspects and out of universal love tried to lead all to the same blessed state. His love excluded none; He had a helpful and uplifting message for all classes—house-holders, sanyasins, men in active business life and even so-called atheists.

The Swami said he could not conclude this short discourse without mentioning one important message Sri Ramakrishna specially laid stress upon by His precepts and living example and that is the Motherhood of God—he looked upon all women as representations of Divine Mother, sweetest, most elevating and most purifying relation we can establish with God in the midst of our physical and material life—God who is our very own, closest, dearest and nearest to us.

* * * * *

The evening service commenced also with the Harmony of Sanskrit chant and then a prayer by the Swami Prabhavananda and a song by Mrs. T. J. Allan. Mme. I. Marks sang offertories at both the services.

Swami Prabhavananda thrilled his audience by the earnestness and intensity of his message, his subject being "The Keynote of Sri Rama Krishna's life." He said in part :

I may not do justice to the sublime life of Sri Rama Krishna, for the more I try to understand Him, the more am I dazzled with the greatness of this God-man. One must indeed be divine to express divinity ; but I shall be blessed if I can but serve you by rousing any genuine interest amongst you to enquire and study more into the life and teachings of this prophet of the modern age. For I make bold to say that Sri Ramakrishna is the fulfilment of the needs and demands of the present age and the more you know about Him and follow His teachings, the better for you and for the world. His was a life without the least idea of egotism. His whole life was a life of sacrifice for the good of humanity. What was the greatest of miracles that he used to perform ? You have heard of the life stories of Krishna, Buddha or Jesus. "Be thou whole," they would say and men would become whole. There are people still living to-day who bear testimony to the fact that their whole lives and trend of thought were changed by a word, a touch from the Master. He did not come to form any sect of his own. But his message was the message of a universal Religion—that religions are not contradictory, but they all lead to the same goal. Such Godmen as Krishna, Buddha, Jesus or Ramakrishna are the living Gods on earth. Whom should we worship ? Our conceptions of a God fall short before the actual lives of these men. They have manifested in their lives actual acts of love, of mercy, of purity, of which we can have no conception even. These are the real Gods of all nations and all races. Mother recognizes the child in any dress he comes. It is the same spirit that incarnates differently at different ages and the same spirit of Krishna, Buddha or Jesus has incarnated in this modern age as Ramakrishna.

* * * * *

The decorations were beautiful and quite befitting the occasion. A special altar covered with gerrua cloth was erected before Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother. A bank of pink roses artistically arranged in a gold-colored basket forming its central part was surrounded by choicest evergreens and other flowers, rare orchids making the crown.

The sweet aroma of the flowers and blossoms combined with the fragrance of the burning incense filled the atmosphere with solemnity which inspired us all with greater yearning to come in closer touch with the messages and teachings of this great Incarnation of the modern age.

DURGA DEVI.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar. ”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman. ’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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GOD

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

WE understand by God a Being that is infinite in every way,—infinitely powerful, infinitely lovely, infinitely conscious ; and because He is infinite, He can never be finite. Then how is it possible for Him to incarnate, to be in the flesh ? Sri Krishna says to Arjuna : “ Although I can never diminish myself, although I am Lord of the whole creation, still with the help of my Prakriti, I have the power to incarnate myself.” Here we must understand what is meant by Prakriti. It must be a peculiar power that can make the infinite appear as finite, and the Lord says that it is with the help of this power that He incarnates. What is this Prakriti, then, by the help of which God comes in the flesh ?

This Prakriti some philosophers have explained as Maya or forgetfulness. Prakriti means creative force, Latin *Procreatrix* ; and creative force means that power which brings something into existence, which makes something into existence, which makes something imperceptible perceptible, sensible, conceivable. What is tangible, sensible, conceivable and perceptible must be limited, because conceiving, perceiving, etc., are all done by mind, which is limited, through the senses, which are limited. We cannot taste everything at once, we cannot see or hear all at once. Mind is bound on all sides by ignorance and

if you compare your knowledge with your ignorance, your knowledge seems infinitesimal. Now it is impossible for the limited to conceive the unlimited. Therefore that which is conceived must be limited. Then how can that power which is limited make the limitless appear limited? It does not seem possible, yet this power in God has the peculiar power to make the impossible possible, the limitless appear limited. So this power is known as Maya, forgetfulness, mistake, taking one thing for another.

Again Sri Krishna qualifies Prakriti with another word,—“My own.” That is, “this peculiar power is my own property. She is not free. I have complete mastery over Her. It is with this power I make myself manifest.” So you see that although Prakriti is inside God, always with Him, still not having any independent existence, it cannot be regarded in any way as distinct or separate from God. But if this power makes Him forget His infinite nature, She must be more powerful than God. This however is not the case. God says that She is His property and She only has the power to bind Him when He tells Her. Just as a servant is called to wrestle with the master ; he may even seem more powerful than his master and apparently defeat him, but the moment the master tells him to go away, he must obey. So Maya is the servant of God and must keep a respectful distance except when God calls Her to wrestle with Him. God does not get overpowered by Maya. Because He has ordered Her to bind Him, she has done so; but when God tells Her to go away, She must go like the servant.

Although this delusive nature is in Him, she has no power of Herself to bind Him. Our Master Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the poison of the cobra is most deadly, yet that poison although in the cobra, does not hurt it. Similarly, Maya is inside God, but can never interfere with the nature of God any more than the poison can injure the cobra. Say that a king wishes in a drama in his palace to play the

part of a sweeper. He may dress and act just like a sweeper, but he knows all the time he is a king and can throw off the disguise at any moment he chooses. So God plays the part of a Creator that He may have the fun of creating, preserving and destroying. That is the method He always follows when He wants to create and this is God's relationship with Maya. God is infinitely powerful, so He has the power to put down the irresistible power of Maya.

But what is our relationship with Maya ? We are Her slaves. God is the Master of Maya and we are slaves of Maya. We are bound under Her. Then how to get rid of Her ? Because we are Her Slaves, She has the power to destroy us, to crush us. But She has no power over the soul. Soul is by nature indestructible, so She cannot destroy that ? She is able, however, to overpower it and make it think that it wants to be born several times. Is there no way to get rid of it ? This all-delusive power which deludes Sishya as well as Guru is irresistible. You cannot be destroyed by Maya, but She can make you miserable through eternity. Will any one like that ? No one will like to commit blunders all his life ; yet Maya is that delusive power which will always make us commit blunders. We cannot love Maya, yet She is our absolute master. Then how are we going to get rid of Her ? Only by the help of God can we hope to get rid of Her. Therefore He says, " This, my slave, holds in Her hands three strong ropes by which She ties all people to the earth ; only by my help can you get rid of Her." A baby wants to go upstairs, but cannot do so ; what can she do ? She can only call to the mother to take her. So we must call on God. Therefore He is constantly telling us not to be proud, not to be vain ; to confess that although we know what is right, we have no power to do it. So we must say to God, " I confide myself absolutely to Thy care." At first vain, proud man thinks, " I must resist Maya. I must conquer Her."

But he learns that it is impossible, just as it is impossible for the astronomer to conquer the heavens.

We want to know all about this earth, so we evolve chemistry, mineralogy, biology and all the other physical sciences, but we come to a place where nature says, "Thus far and no further." The result is agnosticism, atheism. So when you try to resist Maya, she will deal you blow after blow, and the more you resist Her, the more She will subdue you. This man is weak. So long as you think you are Mr. So-and-So you are weak and it is not possible for this weakling to fight against Maya. But there is another side. If you know that you are eternal and indestructible, then you are not body, you are spirit ; and that Self is beyond the reach of Maya, that Self is one with God. If you can identify yourself with this real Self of yours and throw away your self, then you can go beyond the dominion of Maya and this path is known as Gnana-marga. "Sword cannot pierce me ; fire cannot burn me ; water cannot wet me ; air cannot dry me," this is what it teaches.

If this is a fact, how can I identify myself with this body ? So the Jnani tries to throw the body off. But when hunger comes, all this idea flies away. There are men however who still hold to this ideal even in the face of hunger and thirst; but these are extraordinary men and we cannot hope to be like them. We are ordinary men ; we cannot hope to resist hunger, thirst, etc. This man is too weak to resist Maya. So God says to such people, "Giving up everything, take refuge at my feet." Those men who can resist the demands of the body can afford to wage an incessant war against Maya and come out victorious. But they are very few. For the others, they can only take refuge at God's feet, for they have not yet learned to resist their senses. That man who is never overcome by hunger or thirst is so rare that perhaps we have never seen such a man and have only heard of one that he was born and lived at a certain time. For the rest of us, we can only take refuge in the Lord.

But God is so immensely powerful, how can we who are poor weaklings, approach His Majesty. If an ordinary man wishes to approach Edward VII, will he be allowed to do so ? So if I ask God, will He come to my help ? This is the question. There is no fear as to this, for God is like none of our kings or emperors. God is infinitely loving. He is our real Father, our real Mother. Will not this real father and real mother do everything for us ? The difficulty is, we do not go to God. When we are in trouble, we go to a doctor or to some one knowing more than ourselves. We never think of going to God. We think of Him as some one who is far off in a heaven where we cannot reach Him. But that blessed man who believes that God is near and who always flies to Him in all his difficulties, he knows that God can always be reached and that He will never fail to help. The thoughtful man will find out that his condition here is the most pitiable. He wishes to live, but he is forced to die ; he wants to be happy, yet there is always something which brings him misery. Such a man, knowing his own danger and the infinite love of God, is sure to go to God. So God says : " That man who, giving up all other helps, at once comes to Me, I at once come to him, I take care of him, I provide for him." And this is exactly consistent with His nature, for He is infinitely loving. That question, therefore, whether God will come to our help or not, He Himself answers ; for He says, if you seek Me in all times, I shall surely come to your help."

This is not only the case with Krishna. It is said in all Scriptures. " Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I shall deliver thee." And this is the only way for us, caught as we are in this cage of flesh and unable to extricate ourselves. That blessed man who has never separated Prakriti from God, he never cares for Prakriti but jumps to God. When a man worships Prakriti as the Mother of the Universe, that is not blind Prakriti, that is a soulful Prakriti, which is God Himself.

But Science never gives you this Prakriti. It gives you a dead soulless Prakriti, because science has separated Prakriti from God. But that man who has not separated her from God, he worships her as Mother, knowing that She is God.

What kind of devotion takes us to God ? The child's devotion to the mother. But you say, this is not rational. How long do you reason ? So long as you have not arrived at a conclusion. Why does the baby go to the mother ? Because it has reasoned out that the mother is the best friend it has. And why do you go to God ? Because you have previously reasoned out that God will help you and no one else can. So as the baby goes to its mother, you will go to God.

Science is the struggle of man in the outer world ; religion is the struggle of man in the inner world. Science makes man struggle for truth in the outside universe, and religion makes him struggle for truth in the inside universe. Both struggles are great, no doubt ; but one ends in success and the other ends in failure. That is the difference. Religion begins where science ends. The whole scientific method is based on observation and experiment ; but the moment that man realizes that there is something beyond observation and experiment he will give them up and leave science. Science will always have to deal with finite bodies and God is infinite. Scientific method is the ordinary method, for science is based on observation and experiment, and observation and experiment are based on the senses ; therefore science cannot go beyond limited being. But God is limitless.

The question then arises ; Can we ever understand Him ? Of course you can understand Him, because you are He. He is inside you. You have got yourself all mixed up with this Maya and so you imagine that you cannot understand Him. But He is the easiest thing for you to understand. He represents your natural condition.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

THE DIVINE WILL.

SWAMI SHARVANANDA

THE real nature of Brahman is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

There is no action in Him. He neither works nor impels others to work. Wherever there is motion, wherever there is change, we should know that it is the work of His Maya. When the absolute Brahman comes in contact with Maya, He is known as Iswara, the Qualified or Saguna Brahman. Iswara is the Creator, preserver and Destroyer of the universe. Before creation the Brahman alone existed; He willed "*Eko'ham Bahusyam*" "I am one, I shall be many." That Will translated itself into the form of the present creation. So, this Will of His is the seed of Maya, Maya Herself. That Will expresses itself in the form of creation or multiplicity, because the Will of God is Omnipotent.

His one Shakti appears in three aspects Ichcha, Kriya and Jnana. The Vedas never say that these are three different shaktis. If you look to the Vedic texts you will find that there is no differentiation made in the three shaktis. These differences were made by sectarians in the subsequent recitals in the Puranas. Go and ransack all the Vedic texts, and nowhere will you find any mention of these as three different things.

Let us, therefore, make the Vedas our authority, and, as far as possible, let us reconcile the three shaktis in the light of *Buddhi* or reason.

Shakti or energy can never be understood without its expression in action. Energy, whether it be potential or kinetic, must bring about movement or motion for its recognition; and movement is possible only in time and space. So, no shakti can ever be the Absolute Reality. Every shakti, every energy, must come in the realm of relativity, and, as such, it is only another aspect of Maya.

It is clear then that no Shakti can be an integral part of the absolute Brahman. It cannot be the Paramarthic Sat of the Vedas *i. e.*, the Absolute Reality, whose existence can never be known by any expression in the past, present, or future. In that Absolute Reality, there can be no Shakti. There remains only pure Existence, pure knowledge and pure Bliss. This is the verdict of the Shrutis, and if that be the verdict of the Shrutis, then all Shakti, whether macrocosmic or microcosmic, *i. e.*, whether of the Supreme Being Ishwara, or of the limited Jiva must be considered as relative, and cannot form an integral part of the Absolute Reality, which is the Soul of the Universe as well as of the individual souls.

These three Shaktis no doubt belong to Ishwara. I do not deny it. But Ishwara himself is in Maya. The only difference between Ishwara, the Supreme Being, and the individual or limited Jeeva is that Ishwara is Mayadheesha and the Jeeva is Mayadheena.

Brahman has two aspects, Samashti or Macrocosmic, and Vyashti or microcosmic. Ishwara has no Avidya in Him. The Jeeva has, because he has Avidya. The three Shaktis of Ishwara have no limitation, but the Shaktis of the Jeeva are limited. Ishwara is Mayadheesha or the Lord of Maya, and therefore there is no limit to his shaktis.

Free Will is not a misnomer, but the free will of a Jeeva is certainly a misnomer, since will, which is the result of Maya, can never be free. Maya which is *Achit*, which is *Jada* can never, according to Vedanta, be free, since *Achit* is bound by the law of relativity. In that sense Will is never free. Chit alone is free.

The Will of God for creation is also known as His Kama or desire, and there is no distinction between His Will and Desire.

When we desire for sense objects, the desire is gross, and has the effect of bondage, but when we have attuned ourselves to the Supreme Will that has expressed itself in

the form of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction, then desire for action is no more a cause of bondage, but brings about liberty. If we can completely efface from our consciousness all Kama or desires, then the Will of the Supreme Lord will appear through us, and we shall be a conduit for the Divine Will to flow. That Will will no longer be my will, but the Divine Will. My will whose Karta or manipulator is my own individual self is certainly bound, and the will of Ishwara is free in that sense. But from the standpoint of the Absolute, even Ishwara is bound, because he is associated with *Desha, Kala, Nimitta, i.e.,* space, time and causation. But, our conception of Ishwara according to Vedanta is that actually the Absolute has not become relative by actual contact with Maya, but when seen through the screen of space, time and causation, he appears to us as limited, but in his own real self he is ever the same Absolute. Bhagawan Shri Krishna says in the Geeta,

“ Ordinary persons think that I am limited, because I am born in a human form, but they don't know my Supreme Nature as the Lord of Creation, which is beyond all these limitations.”

When we see the Supreme Being through the screen of time, space, and causation, he appears to us as Ishwara—the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer.

With the evolution of human nature, our conception of God also evolves; our conception of divinity undergoes change. Man, according to his own inner nature, forms a conception of God. Swami Vivekananda once expressed that the greatest superstition of man is the conception of God. Because we are living in Maya, because we cannot discern the limitations of our finite being, we cannot but admit the existence of Ishwara. So long as there is Vyashti, there must be Samashti. So long as there is little, there must be infinite. The very conception of “ Finite ” presupposes the conception of “ Infinite ”. So long as we have a conception of our little body and of

the Jagat, we must have the idea of Ishwara or ruler of the Universe. When there is no Jeeva, there is no Ishwara. Ishwara, Jagat, and Jeeva,—God, universe, and the individual soul—these are three parallel lines. If you remove one, the others disappear of their own accord. So you see that the greatest superstition of man is the conception of God. From the stand point of the Absolute, there is neither Jeeva, nor Jagat, nor Ishwara.

When we renounce our individual desires, we become an instrument in the hands of the Supreme Lord. We attune ourselves with the macrocosmic Will, and then that Will flows through the microcosmic conduit. Individual will, which manifests itself in the daily activities of man cannot be free, and what we call “free will,” in common parlance, is certainly a misnomer. From the standpoint of the Absolute, even the macrocosmic will of Ishwara is bound. It is relative, since it is possible only in time, space, and causation.

SWAMI SHARVANANDA.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER

Tota Puri

SWAMI SARADANANDA.

It has already been mentioned before, that when Tota Puri came to Dakshineswar on his way back from the sacred confluence of the Ganges and the ocean, he had no idea of staying longer than three days at the place ; and it was customary with him not to stay more than three nights anywhere at a time. But coming to Dakshineswar, when he met the Master and witnessed the wonderful spectacle of his attaining the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* with such an ease and in so short a time, he got stuck to the place, so to say, and his whole mind was tied to his unique disciple.

Tota Puri, thereafter, stayed on at Dakshineswar for eleven months and his whole intent and purpose at that time was to see his beloved disciple well-established in the *Nirvikalpa* state ; and his continued association with the Master during this period unconsciously revolutionised the thought life of Tota in many points, and many an obscure alley in the path of spirituality was lighted up before him. Perhaps it was also a part of the Divine Dispensation that Tota's own spiritual life would meet its complete fulfilment by coming under the influence of the wonderful spirituality of the Master. And it will not be out of place here, if we tell our readers something about Tota and his short sojourn at Dakshineswar.

Tota was tall and stout and of handsome personality. As a result of long and strenuous spiritual practice and the solitary life of a recluse for forty years he was able to make his mind perfectly still in that absolute state of consciousness known as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. As it has been explained before, this *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* is the finale of all spiritual attainments and the last state that human consciousness can soar to. Even after attaining this *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, Tota kept on his practice of

Dhyana and *Samadhi* and devoted a greater portion of the day to it. He used to remain nude like a child, hence Sri Ramakrishna used to call him 'Nangta'. Moreover, as it is customary, not to take the name of the Guru often, so the Master might have given that designation to Tota. We have heard from the Master that Tota never used to remain within any room or under any shade except that of a tree, and as he belonged to the Naga sect he always kept a fire burning near him. These Nagas look upon fire as the veritable emblem of the Supreme Being and attach much sanctity to it. So, wherever they remain they keep a fire burning near their 'seat'. This is generally called the Dhuni. They worship this Dhuni both morning and evening and whatever food they get by begging they first offer a portion of it to this fire of the Dhuni. So during his stay in the Dakshineswar temple, Tota kept his 'seat' under the spreading shade of Panchavati, and always maintained a fire near him. Be it in the hot sun or pouring rain, the Dhuni of Tota used to flare up all the same at all times ! And all his activities of his awakened state and inactivity of the sleep also used to be by the side of that sacred Dhuni, and again, in the hush of night when the whole world was lulled into deep sleep, wide awake used to be Tota, equally waking up the flame of the Dhuni into a big blaze, he used to fix his mind in Samadhi making it still like 'a flickerless flame of a lamp in a windless place'. During the day also he used to spend much time in meditation, but always he used to do it secretly that others might not notice him. For that purpose he used to cover his whole body with a white sheet and lay flat on his back like a corpse. People used to think he was sleeping.

Tota always used to keep by him a small brass vessel for water, a pair of big iron tongs and a piece of deer skin for his seat. And he used to keep always his body covered with a white sheet of cloth. The brass vessel and the tongs he used to scrub every day and keep them bright. Seeing

him regularly practising meditation every day, the Master once asked him,—“ You have realised Brahman and have attained the perfection in *Sadhana*, then what need have you for the regular practices of meditation. To that Tota slowly replied, pointing his finger to the shining brass vessel, “ Well, look at that, how shining it is ! But, if I don't scrub it every day will it not get dirty and lose all its brightness. The same is the case with our mind also. Constant practice of meditation alone can keep our mind unsullied, otherwise it gets tainted with all sorts of impurities.” But the keen wit of the disciple could see a flaw in the saying of his Guru and he replied, “ True, but if the vessel be made of gold, no constant scrubbing is necessary to keep it shining—it does not get dirty so soon !” And Tota had to accept the truth of this remark with a smiling nod. While speaking of the benefit of daily practice of meditation, the master used to quote often the above utterance of Tota to us, as it made an indelible impression upon his mind ; and we believe the Master's simile of the golden vessel must have also left a deep impression upon the mind of Tota. He must have understood that the mind of the Master was equally bright and pure like a golden vessel and required no daily scrubbing. This kind of mutual interchange—give and take—of ideas used to happen often between the Guru and the Shishya from the very beginning.

The scriptures of Vedanta tell us that man becomes perfectly free from all fear when he attains the knowledge of Brahman, and that is the only path to absolute fearlessness. Indeed ! When man comes to realise that the reality of his self is the eternal, indestructible, uncreated, immutable principle of intelligence called *Atma* which is of the nature of indivisible Absolute Existence—Knowledge—Bliss, and which is transcendental and immanent in all objects at the same time, how can any fear come to him and fear of whom ? When all visions of duality disappear from one's sight and the existence of one indivisi-

ble Unity alone occupies the entire field of consciousness, how can any fear come to such a soul,—he sees nothing else save his own Self. What could he be afraid of? Through all states of consciousness and all conditions of life and through all the activities of his mind and senses he remains conscious of his self to be no other than the *Akhandā-Sat-Chit-Ananda* and he perceives as well that the same exists also in all beings of the universe infilling them; he further feels that this *Atman* of his has neither hunger nor thirst, neither sleep nor wakefulness, neither want nor fulfilment, neither action nor inaction, neither grief nor joy (it has neither birth nor death, neither beginning nor end—It is a denial of all that man sees or perceives with the help of his senses or imagines by his mind. This kind of realisation has been spoken of by the scriptures as the culmination, of the 'process of denial' (*neti, neti*) and the full manifestation of the *Atman* exists at the head of it. And the perpetual consciousness of this *Atman* is what is known as 'residing in Jnana,' and when one can similarly 'reside in Jnana' he gets emancipation from all bondages of life. Naturally one of such realisation has nothing to fear from any body or anything.

From the Master we have heard of many instances of Tota's absolute fearlessness. Among others he spoke also of a spirit manifestation to Tota and we record the same here for the enjoyment of our readers. One night, when Tota was about to sit in meditation by the side of his Dhuni, he heard a rustling sound in the branches of the Panchavati, disturbing the perfect stillness of the surroundings, and soon after, he perceived a tall figure of a man descending from one of the branches and proceeding towards him with a fixed luminous gaze. Tota was very much surprised to notice that the new-comer had equally a nude figure like himself and he questioned who he was. The figure replied that he was a spirit—a *Bhairava* and he was there on the tree

for the safety of the place. Tota was not in the least perturbed to hear it and simply remarked, "That is well, there is no difference between you and me as you are another manifestation of the same Brahman as I am. Come, and sit down to meditate." But the figure laughed to hear it and melted away into air. But this occurrence did not produce any effect on Tota's mind and he engaged his mind in meditation with perfect composure as if nothing had happened. Next morning he related the occurrence to the Master. Sri Ramakrishna replied, he too knew of the existence of that spirit on that tree and had seen it several times before. Further he added that on some occasions the spirit also foretold him of things that were going to happen. Once the government wanted to extent the magazine* compound and acquire the whole of the temple land for the purpose. The Master felt very much concerned to hear it as it foreboded to him that he would be deprived of the solitude of the garden and all facilities for his spiritual practices. Of course, Mathuranath filed a suit in the law court on behalf of Rani Rasmani against the proposal of acquisition. At that time the Master saw once the same spirit on the Panchavati and it was then that it told him that government would lose the case and the land of the temple would never be acquired by them and the subsequent event actually corroborated this foretelling of the spirit.

SWAMI SARADANANDA.

*The magazine that even to-day exists to the immediate north of the Garden of Dakshineswar Temple.

RESURRECTION OR REINCARNATION *

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA.

CHRISTIANITY, as understood and interpreted by the priests and theologians of Christendom, is based on the belief in the resurrection of its great founder and in the possibility of the resurrection of those that believe in that Great Master. But, with intellectual progress and the expansion of scientific culture and knowledge, very few thinkers there are who can accept the idea of resurrection as logical or scientific. Before we examine the theory, let us see how the idea of resurrection became one of the fundamental doctrines of the New Testament. The ancient Israelites did not believe in resurrection. In fact, it is doubtful whether they had any clear, definite conception of the existence of the soul after the dissolution of the body. The ancient Jews were conquered by the Persians in the beginning of the 6th century B. C., and thus they came in contact with a nation which had developed a belief in one God, in a heaven and a hell and in the resurrection of the soul. Under the dominion of Persia, which lasted for more than two centuries, the Jews were greatly influenced by the religious ideas of the Zoroastrians. About this time, the Jews became divided into two classes, the Pharisees and the Sadducées. The Pharisees were those who imbibed most of their religious doctrines from the Persians, while those Jews who remained orthodox in their own religious beliefs were known as Sadducees. But gradually the Pharisees grew more numerous and influential, and, after the death of Jesus, their idea of resurrection became one of the fundamental doctrines of the new Christian religion.

Thus it was that the idea of resurrection first arose in Persia and was afterwards accepted by the earliest

*The summary of a lecture delivered at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, U. S. A., on the occasion of the last Easter Service conducted by the swami.

Christians and became one of their basic principles. The Zoroastrians believed in resurrection and regarded it as a miracle. The same miracle was ascribed to the resurrection of Jesus. And the Christian faith was founded on that miraculous event. Paul, the great apostle of Christianity, preached that Christ was the first born from the dead, that those who believe in Christ will similarly be resurrected and those that do not so believe will never rise from the dead. Both Pharisees and Christians believe in resurrection, not as a universal law, but as a miracle.

But science denies miracles. This universe of ours is guided, not by miracles, but by definite laws that are unchangeable and universal. Every thinker tries to solve the so-called miracle and wants to see if there is any universal law behind it. If he cannot find one, he must reject the idea of miracle. Of course, there may happen supernatural events and so-called miracles and physical science may not be able to explain the phenomena, but if we study and enquire into the subject a little deeply, we are sure to find some universal law guiding such phenomena. But the believers in the idea of resurrection deny the possibility of the existence of any such universal law. To them it is purely a miracle. Has not Paul said, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the *first fruits* of them that slept?" Mark the words "first fruits." Had it been a universal law, Christ would not have been the first one to be resurrected.

Then, again, this theory of resurrection is coupled with the belief that the individual soul does not exist before birth. Created out of nothing, it comes fresh into existence. But science has proved beyond the least shadow of a doubt that sudden creation or total destruction are both impossible. Science teaches evolution and not creation. Thus this idea of resurrection completely ignores all logic and science. On the contrary, the theory of reincarnation, while accepting all the laws discovered by modern science, carries them to their proper and logical

conclusions. Reincarnation is based on evolution. It means a continuous evolution of an individual germ of life, a re-manifestation of all the powers and forces that are latent in the germ of life. And in every individual germ of life there is the potentiality of perfection and divinity. Through varied and innumerable births this perfection and divinity becomes manifest in the end. To manifest that is the purpose and crowning end of life. The life of Buddha, Christ, or Ramakrishna was not a miracle but the fulfilment of natural law. They manifested their divinity and perfection, and each individual has to manifest likewise in some life or other.

Thus this theory of reincarnation is based on the law of causation. Each soul exists from a beginningless past and will exist through eternity. As in the minute seed the whole of the tree exists and evolves into the gigantic tree, so in each soul there is the perfection, and divinity and all-blissfulness ultimately has to manifest these.

The idea of resurrection does not explain the inequalities existing in the universe. Why is one born rich and another poor? Why is one born with the highest intelligence, while another is born debased and dull? St. Augustine tried to explain this, or, rather, explain it away by his theory of predestination. But why is it that the all-merciful, almighty God predestined some to be sinful and others virtuous, some to suffer and others to enjoy? Such a God must be a tyrant God, if ever He had pre-destined these inequalities to exist on His earth.

Some theologians try to explain this by bringing in another being in the person of Satan. They say God created everything that is good and holy and Satan created the evil. But what are good and evil? They have a relative existence and the existence of one depends on the existence of the other. So if God created good, He must have created evil simultaneously, or it might be possible that God and Satan both sat together and simultaneously created good and evil respectively. In that case both are

equally powerful and one limits the other. Such a God cannot be the Infinite God.

The theory of reincarnation explains satisfactorily the inequalities, the existence of good and evil, in this universe. In unmistakable words, Sri Krishna describes the position of Ishwara, or God, in relation to the universe, in the following two verses of the Gita :

“Neither agency, nor actions, does the Lord create for the world, nor does He bring about the union with the fruit of action. It is the universal ignorance that does it all.

“The Omnipresent takes note of the merit or demerit of none. Knowledge is enveloped in ignorance, hence do beings get deluded.”

God is all-blissful, all-perfect; even the shadow of a motive or relation in Him would be contradictory to His nature. We are ourselves responsible for our own actions, our enjoyments and sufferings. Our present life is the result, the re-action of our past life. We suffer or enjoy according to the deeds we did in the past; and our future life will be the result of what we do in this present life. Both enjoyment and suffering both good and evil, we must have in order to gain experience. We pass through different experiences to manifest ultimately our true, perfect and divine nature.

The one and the only objection brought forward against the theory of reincarnation is, that if we have existed in the past, why do we not remember it in the present life? To that we reply, memory is not the criterion of existence. None of us remembers our baby-hood. Does that prove that we did not exist as babies? Then again, we can remember our past if we want to. Those of you who have read the aphorisms of Patanjali, the father of Indian Yoga philosophy, will remember how the process of restoring the memory of our past lives is given in the 18th aphorism. Nothing is more universal. Our actions, our thoughts, leave impressions in

mind-stuff. These impressions we carry from birth to birth. They lie as the dormant impressions of the sub-conscious mind. And *Samyama*, or concentration on those dormant impressions, will bring back the memory of the past. There are people who can remember their past.

Thus, according to the Vedanta philosophy, we pass through many births, through different experiences, ultimately to manifest the perfection, divinity and immortality which are our birthright. And when we manifest that divinity, we become the conquerors of birth and death. Yes, Christ has risen from the dead. Who can deny it? Did he not realise his oneness with the Divine and thus become the conqueror of birth and death? He was no longer subject to either birth or death, for he had attained Immortality by manifesting the highest perfection and the highest divinity. And each one of us has to conquer birth and death and attain to the Blessed Immortality which is our birthright.

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA.

TANTRIK RITUAL

Puja

ARTHUR AVALON

NEXT comes Puja or ritual worship, *i. e.*, strictly, that part of worship which comes under this term. These rules of worship vary amongst communities and in the three main divisions of India spoken of in the Tantras, viz., Vishnukranta, Rathakranta, and Ashvakranta. The Shaktisangama Tantra (an important work) says that the first extends from the Vindhaya Hills to Chittagong the second from the Vindhaya Hills to Mahachina (Thibet) and the last the same hills to the sea.

Taking the eastern corner of the Vindhaya range as the starting point, draw a straight line north and south, extending to the Himalayas in the North, to the sea in the South. Then from the same point draw a line westward till it reaches the confines of India. This will divide India into three parts, meeting each other at the eastern extremity of the Vindhayan range. The part east of this point is Vishnukranta, that to the north is Rathakranta, and that to the southwest is Ashvakranta. These differences in ritual may extend to very small matters. Indeed, in the Tantra and for very good reason, nothing is considered too small for regulation. Thus, in Vishnukranta, worship should not be done with a bael leaf (which is a great Yantra) torn from its stalk. (The Shiva Tantra deals with this subject in its Chapter on Vishnukranta). To offer a stalkless leaf is as bad as "killing Shiva." In Ashvakranta or Deccan, south of the Vindhya, on the contrary, a stalkless leaf must be offered (Lingarchhana Tantra) for the stalk represents Indra's bolt "which should never be put on my head." In Rathakranta there is no ordinance one way or the other. This is only an example of the variances to which I have referred. It will be obvious then that I can only deal with the ritual which is enormously elaborated, in a very general way and in its main outline.

I will give in sequence the ritual following Sandhya after I have dealt with some details in it, and will first deal with the various objects of worship. To understand worship one must understand the Vedantik theory of mind. Shortly stated this is a subtle substance, constantly active and never without an

object. Mind and object exist in constant association until by liberation (Moksha) this dichotomy is resolved in pure Consciousness (Chit or Shiva). Consciousness is not mind, which is a limited manifestation of Consciousness, nor is mind Consciousness, which is the whole (purna) of which mind is a part. Consciousness is the simple unitary ground from which issues mind or subject and matter or object. These two are twin aspects of the Supreme Power (Shakti). Mind appears to be conscious, because it is associated with Consciousness as in its ground and of which it is a manifestation. It is in itself an unconscious quasi-material force which observes consciousness as a whole (Purna akhanda Chit) but by apparently cutting up the whole and making it the limited (apurna), enables man to have that consciousness he usually possesses, viz., consciousness of a limited self and its objects. Shakti operates by negating or veiling Pure Consciousness which is unchanging. Devi or Shakti moves on the inert body of Shiva—the corpse (Shava). If there is no object there is no mind but even if we could speak of the existence of mind in such a case, then a mind without objects which are other than and outside itself would be Pure Consciousness which experiences everything as being itself. The object of the Advaitin's ritual is to pass beyond Mind and Object, to Mindlessness (amanah) which is full Consciousness, which in philosophy is Chit, and in religion the Supreme Shiva-Shakti. But until this happens there is Mind and with it an object. Mind when it functions takes on the *shape* of the object. *It is shapped into the form of the object.* The form may be good or bad. Thus a man who is constantly thinking of the animal sexual function acquires a sexual mind and with that mind follows a sexual habit. And so with money, material power and so on. The object of ritual then is to secure a good object which will (when held to) oust base objects and transform the Mind into a good Mind by its presence. This object should be a religious object. Brahman in Itself can no more be grasped by the Mind than we can grasp the air with a pair of tongs. There must be then some object on which the mind shall rest. Thus, in the Sandhya ritual (done three times a day at morn, noon and evening.) At morn Gayatri Devi is imagined as Brahmi a young girl bright like the sun rising from out the starry sky, clothed in the skin of a black antelope. At midday She is Vaishnavi, a woman in the flush of youth whose abode is the sun and who holds conch, discus club and lotus. At even She is Rudrani, now an old

woman, white and clad in white raiment holding the trident and a human skull. Thus the Power which creates, sustains and dissolves the world is thrice worshipped in each of its aspects. Abstractedly considered, and apart from tradition, any other forms might do. The sex of the Devata might be changed as also its implements. Instead of an old woman riding a bull we might have an old man walking with tottering steps. Or we might imagine the Great Devata, whose Luminous body is the sun in its three stages of rising, midday shining, and setting, symbolising the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world. For we live by the sun's light and warmth and if the sun go, there is for all, death. But the Shastrik form was revealed and answers its purpose. What then is the ritual object? It must vary with the mind's capacity. Simple and uneducated minds think of God in simple and crude ways. Advanced minds have God as their object in more subtle form. The simplest form of object of worship is an image (Pratima) that is, something which represents the Devata or Divinity in three dimensions, the so-called and mis-called "idol". One may hear even some English educated Hindus calling an image an "idol". Some "reformers" call it a doll (Putali). This one can understand because to them orthodox Hinduism is "idolatry". But they learnt through English influences of a "Pagan" word. But it is not easy to understand professed followers of orthodox Hinduism using the term, except on the ground that they have an imperfect knowledge of English. For the term idolatry means, as also of the teaching of the Bible. I have often said and still believe that a true Hindu is not to be found anywhere. Of course there may be in the sense that one man may worship what another man calls an "idol," but that the worshipper himself takes the Deity to be in themselves alone, and as such, Divinity is not an object. This would be ignorance even to the ignorant. A Uriya fisherman was once trounced by a "Hindu" friend of mine for worshipping an image. The ignorant man, more knowing than my rational friend, laughed outright, saying that he too knew that idols were made of wood and stone and were not themselves Deities. As he explained in his simple way, the Divine Spirit dwelt in them and it was this Spirit in the body It was the worshipped. A less simple form than the image is the picture on the flat. Something is

here left to the imagination. A more advanced form is an emblem unlike what it represents such as the Shaligrama stone under which form Narayana is worshipped, or the Linga which is worshipped as an emblem of Shiva, set in the Gauripat which is the female counter part as Power, of that which is half man and half woman (Ardhanarishvara). Philosophically this means that Shiva or "male" form is the static aspect of the One Shiva-Shakti or unchanging Consciousness as Power, and Shakti or "female" form is its active aspect, which creates and appears as the Universe. All minds cannot apprehend "static," "kinetic" "aspects," "unitary consciousness" and other philosophic or scientific terms. Nor is there present need to do so. It will come in time provided that meanwhile they worship God as Father or Mother or as the Father-Mother who made the world. One of the results of religious practice is intelligence as regards such matters. It is objected that the Linga is an obscene notion. Nothing natural is obscene but what the mind makes it so, and if to any European it is obscene he may assure himself that it is not so to the Hindu. He could not have been worshipping the Linga all these centuries if it were obscene to him. For after all why should a mind in search of, or conscious of, obscenity trouble itself with such worship? An obscene mind can get what it wants without all the trouble of ritual worship. This attack like others is absurd. All that is needed is the courage which is not stamped away from its own by misunderstanding criticism or logic.

It is said that before worshipping any other Devata, Linga should be first worshipped.

Skanda Purana (the Puranas, it may be said, acquires a and in particular some of them, are replete with rituals) explain the term Linga as Ether (Akasha) seat of (Prithivi) is its seat (Pitha). "It is the Home of the Gods and is called Linga on account of being the place of residence of the Gods. I may here observe for the benefit of those who only know of Linga as Phallus that it has also other meanings. Some Lingas are established by the worshippers, others are natural Lingas (Svayambhu linga) which spring of themselves from the earth. Some are permanently established; others are made for the occasion. The Lingas are made of various metals, gems, pearls, crystals and so forth. They may be made for the moment even of earth placed on a leaf. The writer saw a Linga of ice worshipped in the Himalayas.

of Amarnath, in the far off, solitary, northeastern mountains of Kashmir. This is a very celebrated pilgrimage and is noteworthy for being in large part a pilgrimage of Sadhus. The Shivalinga should not be shorter than the size of a thumb. Whatever be the material of a Linga or whether it be a permanent (Anadi) Linga or not the ritual is the same, except of course that certain rites, such as collecting earth for and making the image, invoking the Devata into the Linga and bidding it depart, have not, as in the case of the already made and permanent Linga, to be performed. If a Linga of earth cannot be formed then a flower should be used as the Yantra (or object with which worship is done), as the Karavi flower, a jar and so forth. The wise know as the publishers of the Tantras knew, that anything will do for such and kindred purposes. What is important is the Mind and what it does.

A higher form of worship is that in which the object is not material or mental. This is mental or inner worship (manasa puja). The object of the mind is not presented to the Mind, but is presented to the Mind by itself, that is, unaided. A simple worshipper is not capable (always at any rate) of this. More advanced worshippers are so. Gradually through Bhakti and Upasana, which are the preparation for Yoga, the Yoga stage and worship is done of the Point (Bindu or Bindu Bindu) which is seen within oneself between the eyebrows and may be carried thence down the body, or may pass through the stages of Yoga, as Hatha Yoga, Laya or Kundalini Yoga, there is a stage Raja Yoga, the completion of which is Brahma. There is neither worshipped nor worshipper. One may say that one gets what Parabhakti or Devotion, in its highest form, is different from knowledge (Jnana) in its highest form, but they are the same at the top. Nevertheless the difference is a general way an accurate presentment of the Sadhu's path. Hinduism thus, in a wonderful manner provides the stages of development — providing both for the need of the worshippers that that which satisfies this need leads them to a higher stage in which there is no lower but a higher need. For need there is the Brahman consciousness which knows no end (Whole or Purna) is reached.

A VISION AND AN IDEA

My dear S,

From Calcutta I came to Benares in company of a Bhakta family. But I am sorry to say, that though I stayed there for about four months, the place did not suit me so well. About a month ago I came up to Allahabad in their company and have been feeling a little better here than at Benares. During the "Ardha Kumbha" Mela, held here of late, we went to the Tribeni shore at the confluence of the Jumna and the Ganges and lived there in a tent for about a week. In this "mela" Sadhus of various sects and grades assembled to the extent of 7 to 8 thousands in number for bath. On the three auspicious days, viz., Pous Sankrant, Amavasya and Sri Panchami. On these bathing days, the Sadhus went to have their bath in processions. Their Jhandas or distinctive flags were borne on elephants, the Mandaliswars and Mohants walking in palanquins. The Paramahansa Sadhus and others walked on foot in a well-disciplined order. The Nagas were naked, others had a *gerua* dress. Bands and bagpipes accompanied their march. I had never been at any other "Kumbha Mela" before this and was greatly impressed with the scene.

I visited the different Akharas (camps) where they were gathered and was much pleased at hearing how the Annasins and Brahmacharies of our Mission made use of the hospitality and liberality of the Sadhus in general. It grieved me greatly however, to find that our Mission was conspicuous by its absence in this great assemblage of the sects. Swami Vijnanananda, it is true, with a party of his monks, only opened a small outdoor dispensary there but did not provide shelter even to the handful of Sadhus of the Akhara who had come to have a bath on this auspicious day. Our Sadhus had to take shelter either in the Akhara or somewhere else.

When I was at Udaipur about the same time, I stayed for some days with a party of Nagas who were observing their Chaturmasya there. Their Mohant was a man who had a little education but the Nagas were quite ill-educated. But their general behaviour and strict discipline made a good impression upon my mind. A very funny story was told one day as I sat conversing by the side of a Nag. He

turned me and asked, "Maharaj, can you tell me who rules our Lanka now?" I said, "yes, the English"—He rejoined, "The English, impossible, Bibhikhan rules over it." "Why," I replied, "if it be possible for the English to rule over the place where Sri Ramachandraji reigned, how do you say it is impossible for them to rule over Lanka where Bibhikhan reigned?" At this he said, "No, it can never be so. But, you, who wear the dress of a Paramahansa, how dare you speak like a heretic." As he uttered these words, his look became so fierce, that I thought it wise to drop the matter altogether. After a while as I went to the Mohant, he remarked, "I have you seen, Maharaj, how illiterate and bigoted these people are!" In reply I asked, "Why don't you give them a little education?" To this he replied with a sorrowful countenance, that the learned Paramahansa Sannyasins, who are their Gurus, look down upon them for their illiteracy and do not like to mix with them, what to speak of taking any trouble for their education. But, he added, that in times of Kumbha Melas, it is they who make them ride on elephants, themselves walking by their side and fight—even lay down their lives for their precedence and honour. About this I wrote a long letter to Swamiji, who was then in America. He, in reply, wrote a very encouraging letter regarding my plan of work for the re-generation of the Nagas. But our Lord willing otherwise, I went to work amongst the poor at S. and was so engrossed with the work there that for about 25 years, I could take no notice of the outer world.

In this connection I cannot omit to tell you of a sad incident that took place in the recent Mela. It has helped to open my eyes still wider to the dire necessity of preaching amongst these Sadhus the great Gospel of our Lord about the reality and tolerance of all religious faiths.

A certain bhakta brought a few cart-loads of logs of wood for distribution amongst the sadhus. He took his stand in front of the Dashnami Akhara. A few Vaishnabs came to the place and another of them took wood from the cart. At this an altercation overhauled between the Vaishnabs and some Udasi Nagas. The school of Sectarianism soon woke up in their hearts and the Vaishnabs in a large number, invaded the Dashnami Akhara where the Udasis had taken shelter. They began to beat the inmates, help and ultimately set fire to their huts and they The illustration of the Atal Akharas' loss by this fire and as I have His God out one lac and a half of rupees in property, in

this way, shall sound death-knell to all bigotry and sectarianism in the hearts of all religious enthusiasts of this country.

We shall have a banner indicating unity of all religions. That banner shall not be inferior to any in granduer and workmanship. In the surrounding tents and huts should be housed our Sadhus and Brahmacharins, Bhaktas, Pandits and Shebaks. Our Bhaktas would include the orthodox Brahmins of Madras as well as the Europeans coming from overseas. Each of the centres of America should have a tent in it. We would lavishly spend money in giving "Bhandaras" to Sadhus of all shades and grades, always serving them with great humility and sweetness. Was not our master an incarnation of humility, ready to serve the great and the low in equal terms? As for me, if I be spared these three years and be present at the coming "mela," I should like to wash the feet of the roughest Naga with my own hands.

The great role our beloved Swamiji played in the great Parliament of Religions at Chicago, should be enacted again at Haridwar. This time our Lord shall burst upon the Sadhu world with all His granduer and power. They shall know and feel His greatness and be a helping hand to spread His good influence amongst themselves and the outside world.

With love and good wishes

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[We have great pleasure in publishing the above letter forwarded to us by one of the senior Swamies of the Mission. We heartily sympathise with the methods of reforming the sadhus which the Swami has so beautifully expressed in all his sincerity and zeal. We hope that the Swami will have the co-operation of the public in elevating the present condition of our sadhu organisations in India that they would ere long become a power in the land as they had been in days of yore.--Ed.]

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Ethics of Non-violence

“**L**OVE is truth, and hatred is falsehood, because hatred makes for multiplicity. It is hatred that separates you from me ; it is wrong and false therefore. Hatred is a disintegrating power ; it separates and destroys. Love binds, love makes for that oneness. You are become one, the mother with the child, the family with the city. The whole of mankind becomes one with the animals. For love is existence, love is God himself, and all this is the manifestation of that one love throughout. Therefore of every action we have to judge whether it is making for diversity or for oneness. If for diversity, we have to give it up, but if it makes for oneness, we are sure, it is a good action. So with our thoughts, we have to understand whether they make for disintegration, for the many, or for oneness, for binding soul unto soul and bringing one influence to bear. If they do, we shall take them up, and if not we shall throw them off as criminal.”

In the above words Swami Vivekananda has defined love and hatred and has also laid down a rule of life following which humanity could progress towards its destined goal and every individual could achieve the best in life. Furthermore, Swamiji has enunciated, in clear terms, a criterion wherewith one could judge whether a particular action or thought is righteous or not. Righteous actions, based upon love and truth lead to a fuller and nobler life. Hatred and falsehood, on the other hand, lead to narrowness and misery. Thoughts and actions which make for oneness, binding soul unto soul, breathing harmony and peace, lead the aspirant on the upward path of righteousness. Love and Truth demand a sacrifice and an effort. Even as a man at the foot of a hill should

renounce his attachment to the things low down and ascend every step by making the necessary effort, so should the seeker after truth relinquish the pleasures of the senses and one-pointedly work for the cause of Truth. In the passage quoted above Swamiji has pointed out that love and truth are identical in meaning. Virtue, Non-violence (*Ahimsa*), and Strength are also synonymous terms. We shall proceed to see in what sense they are synonymous.

Love, hatred, truth, falsehood, virtue, sin, non-violence (*Ahimsa*), violence (*Himsa*), strength, weakness, these are terms whose exact significance is, by no means, difficult to comprehend. Nevertheless, in the mind of the average man, there exists a confusion concerning the full significance of some of these words. This confusion is often due to unconquered prejudices and slovenly modes of thinking. The mind in which the least prejudice lingers is often incapable of perceiving truth as such. That is why the seeker after truth is enjoined to cast off all petty thoughts away from his mind and lead a life of purity and simplicity. The Asura as well as the Deva may listen to the same words of wisdom, but the mental conceptions they form will depend upon their past experience and the state of mind in which they receive the instruction. "The knowers of Truth," says the Gita, "look with an equal eye on a Brahmana endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah." For, love transcends all distinctions and in this respect is one with truth which seeks to discover the unity which underlies all diversity.

Love begets Truth ; Truth is the progenitor of all virtues ; from virtue springs non-violence and non-violence is the perennial source of strength. We have traced the pedigree of these godly qualities ; which are personified in the mythologies of all religions as guiding

angels, light-bearers and helpers on the path. The fiendish brood which drag a man down and lead him to darkness and misery have also a similar pedigree. Hatred begets Falsehood ; Falsehood is the mother of all sins ; Sin is the source of Violence which is just another name for weakness. We have stated that non-violence is the perennial source of Strength and that Violence is weakness ; it requires a little thought to appreciate the full significance of this fact. Of two pugilists in a prize ring, the man of restraint who keeps himself cool and collected is always the winner ; the man who loses his temper and shows violence not only loses the fight but makes a public exhibition of his own folly and incapacity. Here is a pinch of gun-powder lying on my table. I dare not strike a match-stick with impunity, for I know that there is unseen strength lying latent in that powder. Let it flare up once, there is a small explosion and a little fuss ; the powder has exhausted itself. I can strike any number of match-sticks near it ; the ash that is left may be contemptuously kicked into the dust-bin. Strength lies in restraint. The frightened horse and the maniac who is constantly in dread of danger may appear to show super-human strength, but the man of collected will who taking hold of the bridle stops the horse is the possessor of a superior kind of strength ; the tender-hearted strong-willed man who by soft persuasion convinces the maniac that there is nothing to fear and consequently makes him peaceful possesses strength of a far superior order to that which was exhibited by the maniac.

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Strength has its source in the spirit. It may manifest itself as soul-force having the capacity of controlling and directing the actions of thousands of men, it may manifest itself as intellectual force which by its glamour or logic would either dazzle or convince a few intellectual men and draw them to its side or it may manifest itself as muscular and mechanical force which may cow down

cowards and fools. In all the three manifestations the intensity of the strength is directly proportional to the restraint placed upon it. The greater the restraint the greater the strength.

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Non-violence is a hero's word. He who understands its full significance forthwith becomes a hero. Non-violence is the chosen watchword of the Indian nation ; and it behoves the people of India to understand the full significance of this chosen watchword. The story is told of a battalion of infantry which was efficient in many ways but was ignorant of just one little detail ; the men had a confused notion about right and left. They knew that one of the two must be the right foot but they did not know exactly which. The officer-commanding passed round the order, " Right turn ; quick march." The battalion took the order and marched on in the wrong direction. The misconception of the exact significance of the word " non-violence," often arises from the fact that certain acts which appear violent on the surface are not necessarily violent and certain acts which appear non-violent on the surface are not necessarily non-violent. The timid man who harbours a grudge against his neighbour commits a worse form of violence than the man who in the heat of the moment pays off the grudge with a lathi-blow, confesses his fault, obtains his neighbour's pardon and ever after lives happily with him. The only way of judging whether a deed is violent or non-violent is by carefully observing the motives and associations connected with it. Non-violence is always associated with Love and Strength. Violence is always associated with Hatred and Weakness.

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Non-violence is a positive virtue. Etymologically the word appears to indicate the negation of violence ; but in truth it conveys a much deeper meaning. Non-violence, as we have already stated, is a hero's word. He

who has within himself that stuff of which martyrs and heroes are made ; he alone can understand the greatness of non-violence. The impatient man, who has no faith in the laws of the moral world, and who is in a mighty hurry to achieve results may profess to be non-violent but with the first failure he sheds away his faith and seeks to discover more " expedient " methods. Fame, the last infirmity of noble minds drags a man down from the high moral level necessary for non-violence. Absolute fearlessness, an undaunted courage which defies kings, gods and demons, a tenderness which is moved by the least pain of a suffering brother, a passion for truth, a dispassionate mind which would with equanimity view the spectacle of brothers and kinsmen dragged to the gallows to suffer death for the cause of Truth, these and similar qualities should be cultivated as a preliminary discipline by the hero who would tread the path of non-violence.

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A dastardly coward, who shuns danger, who holds his own cowardly life dearer than the honour of a sister, who goes into hysterics at the sight of blood, has no claim to tread the path of non-violence. He had better take some lessons in the school of violence. Let him first learn to give knocks and receive them with good grace. Between violence and cowardly flight violence is more preferable. Let us quote from Mahatma Gandhi, the great apostle of non-violence, " My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. And in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed coward-

dice. Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty when it was attended with danger did so not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or even suffer any injury. A rabbit that runs away from the bull terrier is not particularly non-violent. The poor thing trembles at the sight of the terrier and runs for very life. Those Hindus who ran away to save their lives would have been truly non-violent and would have covered themselves with glory and added lustre to their faith and won the friendship of their Mussulman assailants, if they had stood bare breast with smiles on their lips, and died at the post. They would have done less well, though still well, if they had stood at their post and returned blow for blow." "The remedy against cowardice is not physical culture but the braving of danger. So long as parents of the middle class Hindus, themselves timid, continue to transmit their timidity by keeping their grown-up children in cotton-wool, so long will there be the desire to shun danger and run no risks. They will have to dare to leave their children alone, let them run risks and even at times get killed in so doing. The puniest individual may have a stout heart. The most muscular Zulus cower before English lads. Each village has to find out its stout hearts."

NEWS AND REPORTS

AN ORIENTAL COLLEGE FOR WOMEN.

AN APPEAL.

It was in the year 1898 that under the inspiration of Sri Swami Vivekananda, a branch centre of Sri Ramakrishna Mission was started in Madras with the late Swami Ramakrishnanandaji at its head. Since then for the last quarter of a century, the Mission has been carrying on its labour of love in various directions for the good of humanity. Under its guidance more than a dozen permanent centres of the Mission have been started in the different parts of the Presidency from which religious propaganda and other useful works are being carried on most effectively.

In Madras City itself the principal activity of the Mission is concentrated upon religious propaganda and educational works. In order to propagate the ancient sacred lore of Vedanta as taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Swami Vivekananda, numerous religious discourses are regularly held in different parts of the city by the Swamis of the Math, in which every attempt is made to expound the truths of Vedanta on a non-sectarian, rational, and universal basis. Besides, training in religious practices is also given to those who seek it. Two religious journals, one in English and another in Tamil, are regularly published along with books on religion in Sanskrit, English, Telugu and Tamil.

In the educational line varied activities are maintained by the Mission in the City.

Firstly, the Mission maintains a Students' Home and Residential High School with a Technical Institute attached to it, where more than 120 boys nearly 80 of whom are indigent and free boarders, receive their education and moral and religious training. The Institution has now attained a universal recognition for its unique usefulness. The Government of Madras has recorded its high appreciation of the institution by awarding a grant of more than a lakh of Rupees towards the building and equipment.

A similar institution has been started for girls also by the Mission. It is called Sri Sarada Matri Mandir. At present there are eighteen girls in the Mandir, and a girls' school with more than 150 day scholars attached to it. The institution is conducted under the supervision of an English lady superintendent with half a dozen young Indian ladies to assist her. Those ladies have consecrated their lives to the sacred cause and are honorary workers. As in the case of the boys in the Students' Home, moral and spiritual training along with secular and technical education form the special feature of the institution. Moreover, helpless young widows, orphans and poor girls are given first preference in admission. Sanskrit is compulsory for all students in the institution.

Now, it is the desire of the Mission to raise the institution into an ORIENTAL COLLEGE FOR WOMEN where women will be taught the sacred Scriptures and philosophy of the Hindus along with the different branches of Modern Science.

In these days every true Indian feels the imperative need of imparting true education to Indian women. Woman's education is not so much for earning bread as for rehabilitating our ancient culture, putting and spirituality at home and infusing new spirit and vigour into the race by dispelling all weakening superstitions and ignorance about the realities of life. Our modern educational institutions are lopsided and they are bad enough for the boys, so it is high time for us to save our girls at least from their baneful effects.

Several institutions have been started no doubt here and there to impart education to girls on national lines, but the Ramakrishna Mission stands out as a uniqueness of its own in the method of imparting that national education. It has been trying it with boys for the last nineteen years and the result has been a great success, and now it is trying to apply the same method to the girls also with the necessary changes and modifications. The key-note of the method of education adopted by the Mission has been *Man-making*, the development of character and mind. The greatness of character is based upon the spirit of self-sacrifice and service, and that spirit cannot be fostered or kindled without a living example of service. The same rule holds good with religion or true spirituality also. Copy book maxims can make a man neither moral nor spiritual, nor self-sacrificing. Hence every educational institution under the Mission is made a veritable temple with a person of real spirituality and self-sacrifice at the head of it.

Now the proper development of the above institution for girls will immediately require at least a lakh of rupees for the building and other equipments apart from the running expenses.

So we earnestly appeal to our generous countrymen and charitably minded people to contribute their mite to raise this temple of education for women.

SIVANANDA,

PRESIDENT, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.

B.—*All contributions can be sent to :—*

THE PRESIDENT, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,

MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

We have great pleasure in acknowledging the following donation :

Miss S. R. Childers	Rs. 1,000
Sir S. R. M. M. Annamalai Chetti	Rs. 1,000
A friend	Rs. 1,000.

IN MEMORIAM

We are very sorry to announce the passing away of Yogin Ma, one of the few remaining direct disciples of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna. She entered into Mahasamadhi on the 4th June at the "Udbodhan Office," the residence of Holy Mother when she used to be in Calcutta. She had been ailing for some time from rheumatism and weakness due to old age. Yogin Ma belonged to a very aristocratic family. At an early age she felt the vanity of the ordinary life of an hum-drum existence. So she renounced all connections with her worldly life in a way and took to a life of meditation and Tapas. It was during this period she came into contact with S. J. Balaram Bose, the well-renowned devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. He it was that brought her to Sri Ramakrishna who accepted her as his disciple. Sri Ramakrishna had a high regard for her spiritual attainments and always spoke in high terms regarding her to his other devotees. Yogin Ma was very much favoured of Holy Mother. Their relations were always very intimate. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, Yogin Ma lived for some time with Holy Mother at Brindavan. There she spent all her time in prayer and meditation. While she was living there, as well as on another occasion, she was blessed to enter into samadhi and remain there for a long time enjoying the indescribable peace that is beyond all power of description. The Swami Vivekananda knowing her realisation told her, "Mother, you will leave your body in samadhi ; for to those who have once enjoyed the bliss of Samadhi, the memory of their realisation would revisit them during their last moments and they invariably would again be drawn into that state once and for all."

At the ripe age of seventy three she gave up her body and has entered that Blissful Region from where there is no return. She was an ideal of Indian woman-hood. Those who had come into contact with her could not but admire her strict routine of life. Her days were spent in prayer, meditation and reading the Puranas. Until she was bed-ridden she used to get up very early and bathe in the Ganges and tell her beads on the banks, however cold or hot the weather might have been. Her life of intense absorption in Dhyana and Japam was an

object-lesson to many. During her illness, Swami Saranandaji was constantly in attendance, nursing her and making all the necessary arrangements to nurse her. By her passing away, another bright star from the firmament of the Master's devotees has set. We pray and hope that the memory of her life and her blessings would ever help us to keep the ideal of the Master whom she so admirably served, constantly before our eyes and inspire us to shape our lives in the true spirit of self-sacrifice and self-surrender.

Om Shanti ! Shanti ! Shanti !

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION ?

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

BEFORE I explain what evolution is desirable to give some idea of materialistic monism. Materialists all over the world regard the universe as coming out of one substance and that substance goes by the name of matter. What is matter ? Until recently the prevailing opinion was that matter was composed of atoms. But that theory has now been exploded. Atoms are no longer counted as the smallest particles that make up matter. Electrons are the smallest particles. These electrons, being some of them positive and some negative, attract and repel one another and out of this attraction and repulsion, revolution takes place. These revolutions are of different velocities and on account of the difference that exists in the velocity of the revolutions, atoms of different kinds come into existence. Electrons are all one, but scientists do not consider that they are the smallest particles into which matter could be divided. They believe that there are finer particles existing in ether, the sub-stratum of all matter. However, so far as we have gone, electrons are the smallest particles and it is through their various revolutions that we get our ninety-two atoms ; and out of atoms molecules come into existence, out of molecules come sensible objects, and out of sensible objects, the whole universe as we see it.

die, what will become of them ? The answer given is, that they are extinguished. Newton and Goethe no longer exist, but their influence continues to live. They have contributed their quota to universal evolution. This theory, however, is very unsatisfactory, for everyone wills to be. And out of that will-to-be has come the struggle for existence ; while out of the struggle for existence, the highest forms of life have sprung ; consequently, the destruction of forms cannot be the cessation of the will-to-be.

Now we ask, since this theory is unsatisfactory, what will finally triumph ? Will consciousness triumph, or unconsciousness ? But if consciousness is the highest development of matter, then it must triumph. But what is consciousness ? Consciousness means knowledge. For example, Darwin was thinking of his theory of evolution. He kept on thinking and thinking, and thus he evolved his theory. But without Charles Darwin could the theory have come ? No. It came out of the brain of Charles Darwin. You remember the Story of the Weavers. There were ten of them, but on their way they had to cross a river. When they got over, one of them counted the number and found that there were only nine. So several of them counted and each found that there were only nine. Then they all began to weep and lament believing that one had been drowned, until a passer-by came and asked them what the matter was. They told him of the loss of their companion. "How many were you ?" he asked. "Ten," they replied. "But you are still ten," said he and then he counted and showed them that they were ten. The trouble was that in counting, each man forgot to count himself. This same blunder the materialist philosopher has committed. He has forgotten to count himself. Yet he is the ~~thinker~~. Without him who is to study nature ? First he must remember himself. In every process of thought the think-

er must be the beginning. And who is he ? Is he dead unconscious matter ? No ; he is a conscious being, and so out of consciousness all else comes.

The evolution theory, therefore, which fails to count the conscious being, is inadequate. For the materialistic philosophers, soul is merely a development of matter. Let us take their theory for granted. If it is true that consciousness has evolved out of matter, out of consciousness again must evolve an infinite consciousness and this infinite consciousness must first have been involved. What is the nature of consciousness ? Consciousness is nearer to us than dead unconscious matter.

My nature is to live, my nature is to think and to be free. But I have not yet realized this nature.

The materialist will tell you that when you die, you will be extinguished, but that all that has been gained by you will exist in your progeny. If this is true, in course of time there must develop a being with such a power of will that death itself will not be able to destroy him. He will be beyond the reach of death and when that comes he will have to be *Sat-Chit-Anandam*. I may want to live, I may want to know, I may want to be free ; yet I may die. But my progeny at some future time must realize all this ; and he will exist for ever, he will know all and he will be free. If he is all this, then he is God. But if an all-perfect Being has been evolved out of matter, he must first have been involved in it as an all-powerful, eternal, indestructible Being ; and he who has thus involved himself, must have been God Himself. He must have been the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, for He is all-powerful. If then the final outcome of the process of evolution is to be an eternal, free, all-powerful Being, that Being must be involved in each of us ; everyone of us should be potentially divine.

As a whole this consciousness may live, but individually its duration is only a few years, this is the conclu-

sion of materialistic Western philosophers. Individually man dies, but as a whole consciousness goes on until a perfect, all-powerful being results. But the perfect, all-powerful being must have been in each individual.

Now let us see what has been said in our own country. Kapila and others have regarded evolution, not as a universal fact, but as an individual fact. Each individual begins in the lowest state of consciousness and goes to the highest through the intermediate stages, according to his karma, rising higher and higher through the various planes of creation. And how many individuals are there ? How many souls ? An infinite number, Kapila says. Matter is one, consciousness is one, but those, who manifest matter and consciousness are infinite in number. This universe, as we know, is made up of variety. Then how to explain this variety, if matter is one ? Nature is one, absolutely one ; she is all-pervading. She is the mother of the universe and the father is the soul. Soul has no form, matter has form. The soul you cannot see, hear, taste or smell ; matter you perceive, taste and smell. Whatever you can connote or denote of matter, soul is just the contrary.

All souls are similar, but not the same. This is also the view of Sri Ramanuja, who declares the soul to be eternal. Ramanuja, however, regards the soul as smaller than the smallest, while Kapila says that it is larger than the largest. Kapila also declares that all souls are one. Of this he gives a fine example. He says that just as water is one, yet it entering a mango seed, a mango tree comes or a jack-fruit seed, and a jack-fruit tree comes ; similarly, the soul is one, but entering different forms, it takes on different shapes and so variety arises.

Soul is described as eternal, all-pervading, indestructible. The nature of the soul is calmness, desirelessness. Matter also is desireless. Because it is dead and unconscious, it is desireless ; while soul is desireless because it has

no want. But if both are desireless, how can union take place ? How can creation come into existence ? Kapila says, creation can only come into existence by matter getting into connection with the soul.

Now the question follows, when did the union take place ? Kapila says, I see that this union has taken place and it must have come out of another union, for union has always been there and will continue ; so creation must be running on eternally.

But if this union is going on eternally, is it desirable for man to remain in this creation for ever ? Kapila replies, no ; and then proceeds to say that when the soul gradually disentangles itself from the meshes of sensual pleasures, it comes to realize its natural condition. Now all the world has drunk the liquor of sensual enjoyment and has run mad—just like a drunkard who sees a dead rat and eats it, taking it for good meat. Similarly, many have drunk the wine of sense pleasures and are running after the world, believing that it will make them happy. Yet they are miserable. They believe that it will give them life, yet it brings them death. If this be the case with man, how can he hanker after the infinite ? Yet until he has attained infinite knowledge he will have to be restless ; for the finite is an unnatural condition for him and he must always be restless so long as he is out of his natural condition. Restlessness is always an unnatural condition.

Nature has been described as a beautiful young girl who fascinates the man and draws him away from the right path. At first he is deceived by her, but at last he finds out that nature is a woman who is not to be trusted. Nature is a pot full of poison only brimmed over with a little nectar ; but as soon as man finds out the poison, he runs away ; and that moment the man becomes a free soul.

How does man become free from nature ? As soon as he discovers her deceitful nature, he divorces him-

self from her, as it were. He says : " I will not take your food, I will not take your water. I do not want your pleasures. I wish nothing from you." Thus Kapila found out a path, following which man becomes free from nature. And what was that path ? The path of going, not towards nature but away from nature ; the old path of renunciation. " I must go away from my eyes, I must go away from my ears, from my hands and all my organs." The Sankhya philosopher, in this way, did not care to walk, so he did not take the help of his legs ; he did not care to work, so he did not take the help of his hands ; he did not care to see, so he did not take the help of his eyes ; and so he gave up the use of all his organs.

Next he wanted to go away from his mind but he did not find this so easy. You look at the chair for one minute ; you actually perceive the chair for only one second, the other 59 seconds are in the memory. What is present ? The present is only a point in time. The world exists only in the present and as the present has no duration, the world does not really exist except in our memory. It is, therefore, not difficult to get rid of the present world, but it is exceedingly difficult to get rid of the past and future worlds. However, in course of time, man will be able to put down the mental world and then will come perfect calmness, which is his true nature.

The difference between Kapila's evolution and Western evolution is that while western evolution is a universal evolution and imperfectly worked out, Kapila's evolution is individual and perfectly worked out. Kapila says : this world is a terrible place ; man must try to escape from it. So he preaches, " Give up ; there is no happiness here." Evolution here is not evolution, it is really revolution consisting of equal amounts of progress and retardation. Like the bullock, tied to the oil-press, which may walk nine or ten miles a day, yet always remains in the same place ; so we remain tied to nature. We

may be born again and again, but always we are led away by the same attraction to woman ; always the same lust enslaves us.

We find in nature, therefore, things not progressing, but going in a circle. In creation it is never evolution, but always movement in a circle ; January, February, March and again at the end of twelve months January, February, March ; summer, autumn, winter and spring, and once more summer and autumn ; boyhood, youth, old age, and again babyhood, boyhood, etc. It is all Samsarachakra, an eternal going round and round in a circle. The only evolution is inside yourself. The more you go within, the more you grow strong. The Yogi shows us this.

So if you want to have real evolution, real power, you must go inside yourself. The moment you go outside, you dissipate yourself, you scatter your forces. So Kapila says, " Give up this world, which is always drawing you outward. Have no smell even of the world about you. Then alone you will realize your highest nature, and as soon as you realize it, there will be no motion for you ; for you will know yourself to be all-pervading and if you are all-pervading, you cannot move. When you understand this, you will realize the meaning of Shantih or Final Beatitude.

Thus Kapila has worked out his theory until it has become a fact. The Western theory is still only a theory because it has not been carried to a final conclusion. But beyond Kapila is Monism. According to Monism there is no such thing as evolution. Monism says there is only one ; there is none else besides myself. Hence evolution is all the trick of Maya. The whole of this development is only imagination. If you are infinite and perfect, how can you develop ? And you are infinite, you are perfect and you are the only one. You may be imagining yourself as finite, that does not matter ; you

may be imagining yourself as many, that too does not matter. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that a flint stone may stay thousands of years under water, but when it is taken out and struck, the spark will still come out. So you may have been living in Maya for ages and ages, yet that does not change the fact that you are really infinite and perfect.

No evolution therefore can exist in a world of reality. In a false world it exists, but nowhere else. Evolution means Maya, illusion. You have never been evolving. You have been dreaming a big dream for ages and when you wake up, you are at once a Buddha. Then you will know that you have never evolved, that growth or change is impossible for you.

Now let us examine the three theories. According to Western philosophers evolution has been going on in nature from the beginning. According to Kapila, evolution is in the mind only. And according to Monism, there is no evolution at all. You are all perfect, you cannot evolve. It is only a *chakram*, like the bullock tied to the oil mill ; and when illumination comes, you will realize that all was a dream. According to the Monistic standpoint, there is no progress, no diversion ; and this is in accordance with the teachings of our Scriptures. As one wave of the ocean rises and falls and then another, and so on ; so the waves of creation rise and fall.

If however we look at the world from our present limited standpoint, I think Kapila's theory the most perfect of all. You know that in India philosophy is not a theory. When a man writes out a Darshana, he does not write a theory, but writes what he has realised, what he has seen ; so what he gives is a fact, not a theory. Hence, if with Kapila you believe in two entities, then Kapila's explanation is the best of all explanations. We must evolve and the final end of all evolution is to realize that we are infinite and not finite.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

THEISM OF THE VEDAS*

SWAMI SHARVANANDA

EUROPEAN Sanskrit scholars are of opinion that the conception of godhead, among the ancient Indo-Aryans, must have reached a high stage only in the Upanishadic period. They think that in the Samhita period even the most elementary conception was unknown. Western savants have propounded two theories about the origin of religion. Some of them believe that it has begun with the worship of nature as among the ancient Aryans. Others say that it has originated from the worship of the spirits of the departed as it is prevalent among the non-Aryans. Western scholars hold that in the Rig Vedic period, the Aryan conception of Godhead was polytheistic and that those *Uktis* which speak of the One Supreme Spirit are an interpolation.

There are four chief schools of thought amongst the orthodox Hindus, which hold different views about the origin of the conception of Godhead. They are the Sankhyans, the Mimamsakas, the Naiyayikas, and the Vedantins. The Sankhyans believe in the existence of *devas* (literally the shining ones) such as Indra, Varuna, Vayu and so forth. These *devas* are certain *Purushas*, who in the previous Kalpa, had concentrated their minds on *Prakriti* (primordial matter) and became merged in it. At the beginning of this Kalpa, they have come out as rulers of elements and certain spheres of existence. This is how the Sankhyans explain the existence of gods. According to the school of thought to which they belong, any *purusha* can attain the position of the *devas*, provided that he does the necessary spiritual practices.

The Pauranic idea, though very similar, is more amplified. A soul has to go through innumerable stages of evolution from the lowest life. Manhood is not the last word on evolution. There are higher planes. These

*From the notes of a lecture delivered by Swami Sharvananda, in the Presidency College, under the auspices of the Sanskrit Association, in 1923.

are the planes of the devas. The devas are as much limited and conditioned as man. They have not attained the *Kaivalya* but they possess more powers than man. Behind all the souls, whether devas or man, there is the Universal Spirit guiding them.

The Sankhyans believe that Purusha (Spirit) and Prakriti (Matter) act upon each other and thus bring the world into existence. One class of Sankhyans has absolutely no faith in the idea of a Supreme God. Another class led by Patanjali believes in a personal God who has no hand either in the creation or the destruction of this world. He is only the repository of the ancient wisdom and eternal teacher of the spiritual truths. He it is that shows the path to *Kaivalya*. But the Pauranikas believe that God, the Universal Spirit, is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of this universe. The Naiyayikas hold almost similar views.

But there is a radical difference of opinion between the schools mentioned above and the Mimamsakas and the Vedantins. The Mimamsakas have no belief in the doctrine of final emancipation. All men, they say, should observe the *Dharma*, because it is the injunction of the Vedas. By performing Karma, one can attain Paradise and heavenly bliss is the goal of human endeavour. The devas are certain spiritual beings who dispense the rewards to the meritorious. Iswara has no place in their scheme of cosmic life.

The Vedantic conception however, is that there is only one Universal Spirit or Soul which is split up into many individual souls. As the water in the sea is lashed up into waves, so also the Brahman, by the action of Maya, assumes innumerable forms. So each soul is potentially divine. Apparently these are so many souls; but *really* there is only one. To take an illustration, we take the table and the book as two different things from the point of view of utility. From the point of view of matter, they are both the same.

A critical but an impartial study of the Vedas, from the Samhitas to the Upanishads, will yield the following results. In the Samhitas the apparent meaning of the hymns is the praise of a god or other. The votary is full of desires and wishes to have them fulfilled. The Samhita conception of the Vedas is known as the Karma-kanda. But we go deeper and find that beneath the conception of plurality, there is the idea of unity. In the Rig Veda it is explicitly said that the several gods are all really one. In the Rig Veda we have these conceptions of Godhead. One of them is the conception of the plurality of gods who are worshipped in order that the worshippers may have their desires fulfilled. Behind this polytheistic conception is the montheistic idea of a Supreme God. According to Yaska, there are only three gods—Agni, Surya or Savita and Indra. These are subsequently amplified into three and thirty. In a certain place, we find mention has been made of 3,339 gods. Sayanacharya, in his preface to the commentary on the Rig Veda, expresses his opinion that these 3,339 gods are only the *mahima* or glory of the three and thirty gods, who in their turn are only amplifications; of the three gods these three again are summed up into one. When we read the hymns in praise of Agni, we find Agni extolled to the position of the Supreme Being. It is said there that he is the Indra and the Suryasavita as well. Indra is praised as the power of the gods.

Prof. Max Muller, not knowing the traditional instincts and culture of the Hindus, was not able to understand the true meaning of these mantras. He therefore coined a new word, 'Heno-theism,' to signify this phenomenon of the Hindus ascribing supreme power to each of the several gods in turn. But this view is unsound. The theory of the Vedas is to see the Supreme Being through the worshipper's *Ishtam* or Chosen Ideal. Thus a Saivite

worships the Universal Spirit through Siva and a Vaishnavite worships the same Spirit through Vishnu. The Supreme God is spoken of by different names. *Ekam Sat Vipra Bahuda Vadanti*. In the Maya Rik of the 10th Mandala of the Rig Veda, there are three mantras where it is said that the same Being assumes different forms. Thus we start with polytheism and are taken up to monotheism. In the Hiranyagarbha Sukta, there are various searching questions about the great First Cause, such as Who created the world? What substance is it made of? To whom shall I offer my *havis* or offering? Here the worshipper recognises that the First Cause is a transcendental Supreme Being, but he does not understand Its true nature. In the Rig Veda itself we find the seed of the highest Monism. In the famous Nasadiya Sukta, we find a hymn which says that the Supreme Being is One without a second. From these few *Riks* it is clear that the highest monism had been reached even in the Vedas. One of the *riks* which can be found in the Rig Veda, Taittiriya Aranyaka, and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, says: "Indra assumed many forms by the power of Maya." If anyone says that the Hindus were purely polytheistic in the Vedic period, he betrays his ignorance.

Though the major portion of the Upanishads speaks of the immanence of God in the forms of nature, and is Visishtadwaitik (qualified monistic), a few passages speak of the Nirguna Brahman (Impersonal Absolute) and certain passages, of the Dwaitik (dualistic) conception. These different portions are subjects of controversies between the three different schools of Vedanta, Dwaita, Visishtadwaita and Adwaita. For the sake of conformity, each Acharya commented upon the Upanishads according to his own view, often by even torturing the texts. It is not essential to follow the principle of *ekavakyata* (conformity) in interpreting the Vedas. It appears to me that the Vedas are the expressions

of spiritual visions as perceivable by human mind in the different stages of spiritual development; and all these different expressions or conceptions are necessary to make the whole. From the sense plane, the conception of duality is only natural. It is the *prima facie* view of the world. When things are seen from the standpoint of idea or inferential knowledge, we find unity in diversity. In a still higher plane, when we transcend even time, space and causation, only unity is experienced. All the three schools or conceptions of dualism, qualified monism, and monism can thus be reconciled.

As expressed by the Naiyayikas and the Mimamsakas, plurality of life and plurality of matter constitute the experience of life. The doctrine of unity of matter and plurality of spirits is postulated by the Sankhyas. This is correct when seen from the mental or psychological standpoint. Though there is no *vijatiya* (generic) or *swajatiya* (specific) ^{efat} *bheda* (difference), there must be *swagata bheda* (organic or internal difference). Though the waves are all different from one another, there must be an ocean behind them. The position of the Visishtadwaitins (qualified monists) is that only a part of God has become manifest as the Universe. Individuality remains but unity is also felt.

But this unity in diversity does not constitute the whole truth nor its highest aspect. Even *swagata bheda* (organic difference) is based on the conception of time and space. If we can rise to a position where even *swagata bheda* does not exist, then that would be the real unitary state. If that state is realised in consciousness, and if it becomes permanent, we have to admit that it is above time and space. And this state is Paramarthika (absolute) where unity alone is realised. Man can know through the Aptavakya (Revealed scriptures) and the anubhava (experience) of the great Rishis (seers or

sages). The Paramarthika state is different from Sushupti (deep-sleep state). In Sushupti too, we transcend time, space and causation; but the seed of dual consciousness still remains though without Upadhi (adjunct). The Sushupti state is not permanent and the moment we come down, the unity is changed. But once the Nirvikalpa Samadhi is realised, the consciousness of unity becomes permanent and the core of duality is destroyed never to return. Once the Turiya consciousness is attained it becomes abiding. Such Acharyas as have attained it, interpret the passages speaking of Nirguna Brahman in the right way, whereas those who have not attained that state cannot understand them and interpret them as referring only to Saguna Brahman (Personal God). When once a man has risen above time and space, there cannot be any more evolution and therefore that state must be taken as the final reality; for none can go beyond Infinity.

The three kinds of consciousness, the dualistic, the qualified monistic and the monistic, are referred to by Hanuman when he says: "When I think of the Jiva, I am Thy servant and Thee as the Master; when I think of the Jiva, I am Thy servant and Thee as the Master; when I think of the Atman, I am one with Thee and Thee as the Atman, I am one with Thee and Thee as the Atman. I. Then I bow down to Thee as the Supreme Self."

In Hinduism, all these three stages or states of consciousness find expression. Really there are no contradictions between them. The theism of the Vedas, therefore, begins with polytheism and ends in monism. Those who start with Yagna (rituals) and have not risen above Kamana find duality only. Sankaracharya says that the Sastras, especially the Karma Kanda portion, are meant only for those who are in Avidya. The devas are mentioned in various passages as parts of the same Supreme

Spirit. I am of opinion that all the seven worlds are not seven points in space, but seven planes of consciousness. Bhurloka is the lowest plane, Bhuvarka is subtler, Swaroka is still subtler and so on. The Satyaloka is the highest plane and the plane of the cosmic mind whose ideas are manifested as the different things of the world. There are two theories as to the origin of the *devas*. Some say that they are souls evolved from lower planes, while others hold that they are involved expressions of the Supreme Deity. The latter may be considered as the real Vedic idea and is similar to the idea of Avatars (Incarnations) as involved expressions of the Supreme Being.

If we analyse the religion of the Hindus, we find that all these different conceptions are prevalent there. Other religions give only one aspect of evolution while the Vedic Religion gives all the different stages from Fetishism to the highest Monism. Therein lies the glory of the Vedas. The Vedic Religion gives the different rungs of the ladder of ascent.

The Puranas and the Smrities have amplified the Vedic conceptions. Without them the popular mind cannot understand the Vedas. Every religion has three aspects, viz., philosophy, mythology, and ritual. Philosophy is abstruse and is understood by the common folk only with the help of mythology. As the Vedic truths have not only to be comprehended but also to be realised, we must train our consciousness for such realisation and religious practices are necessary for that purpose. Such practices are to be found in the Ritualistic and Upasana portion of the Vedas. Sayanacharya says that the Puranic stories are not always to be taken, a fact of history, but as stories intended to exemplify certain moral and spiritual truths.

Bhagavan says in the Gita :

Whatever devotee seeks to worship with faith what form so ever, that same faith of his I make unflinching.

SWAMI SHARVANANDA.

ISVARA,—HAS HE ANGER ?

K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR, M. A.

OF late there has been a good deal of discussion among thinkers and theologians in the West upon the question whether God has and exercises the emotion of anger, and in what sense ? Its bearing upon the Vedantic conception of Isvara has clearly an interest for us in India. The problem, too, is one which throws light on various aspects of Indian thought and life, and therefore deserves consideration. In the *first* place, we must not fail to note that we are here concerned only with the conception of the Supreme Being having relations with men and the universe,—not as Impersonal or Pure existence, the One only without a Second; mere experience as such. We cannot associate love and anger, reward and punishment, plan and purpose, law and life, creation and destruction with the Noumenal Unity of the Brahman, pure and unchanging,—the Innermost light of Bliss, beyond the pluralistic world of sense and thought, will and emotion, emanating from the bosom of primordial matter in its causal state of darkness and death. In the *second* place, we must clearly understand that, when we use words expressive of emotion, impulse, purpose, etc., in respect of God, we attach—and must attach—to them the same import as they have when we use them in describing our views of men and our dealings with them in life. Otherwise the discussion loses its value, and no vital issue can be raised or settled on the quicksands of mere verbiage.

We must begin by realising that many of the difficulties of Western theology arise from the fact that its conception of Personality is drawn from the scientific analysis of the mind, conscious and sub-conscious, and that it bases its conclusions regarding the personality of God

from what we know of human personality under its limitations of thought, time, and place. All modern modes of thought concerning religion are effected by the apprehension that, unless our conclusion is based on the facts revealed by science and the lessons drawn from the history of civilisation and human progress it is bound to dry up and wither away into an inconclusive unreality in course of time. But in truth the Personality of God is as the poles apart from that of man,—for it is inseparably associated with the attributes of Universal Immanence, Universal Transcendence, and is thus emancipated, from the limitations under which personality is alone found to operate in man. The truth is that analogy has played a memorable part in settling for many of us the truths of religion. Even the Vedas which have ever been understood in India as the one source of true knowledge apart from sense perception and the methods of reasoning are known to resort to analogies in various places. But doctrines affirmed in this fashion are not to be understood as conveying the true and final purport of the Vedas. At the same time we cannot admit that the analogies put forward by the Veda (or by the human mind acting on its own spiritual impulses, needs, or interests) can have no value for the mind of the thinker. Even the thinker must admit that those analogies are drawn from those same human impulses, needs, interests, etc., which form part of our ordered experience of life. Hence they have an intrinsic value of their own, and in fact enable us to reject the sceptical doctrine that, whoever postulates or discusses a doctrine concerning God has necessarily to begin and end with an abstraction,—a merely *a priori* concept of the imagination.

As anger is a decisive element in the workings of the human personality, and even rises occasionally to heights of vehemence which we characterise as fury, the inquiry has been stated (first by Mr. Edwyn Bevan in the *Quarterly Review*, April 1923),—Can we attribute the passion

of anger, and anger, too, varying in its stages and amounts according to the occasion which calls it forth, to God ? The Christian religion, basing itself on the Old Testament tradition, has attributed anger to God as the Avenger when man breaks the divine commandments and thereby commits sin. The modern Christian, who has learned to apply the principle of evolution to the teachings given in the Bible holds that, though in the history of the Jews there was a gradual advance in moral ideals through the reforms initiated by the prophets, the race never was able to eliminate the idea of a wrathful Jehovah from its religion,—and that it was Jesus who, recognising the imperfection of the older conception of God, added the idea of a loving father and the Kingdom of Heaven (in the world and in human hearts) over which he is to reign. Some go further and hold that Jesus entirely discarded the Old Testament conception of an avenging God for that of the loving father who reigns in the new Kingdom of Heaven. But the more authoritative view is that Jesus never spoke disparagingly of Jehovah,—and never corrected the old Jewish law by way of relaxation, but only confirmed it, while at the same time he made a fresh start and taught that God is a loving father always ready to forgive the repentant sinner, to extend his grace freely to him and to bestow on him all the joys of Heaven for ever. The old law of punishment has also said :—“His lord was wroth, and delivered him unto the tormentors till he should pay all that he owed.” “If Ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly father forgive your trespasses.” These extracts show that Jesus did not altogether abandon the idea of an angry and avenging God and also held that “God’s forgiveness was granted on conditions.” St. Paul, too, has said :—“The wrath of God is revealed in Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. It was the influence of Cicero and other philosophers and of the Latin fathers and the Hellenised Christians like Philo of

Alexandria that brought about a change. Cicero had said :—" God is never angry ,and never does harm." He held that divinity and the passion of anger and in fact passion in any form, are incompatible. " Anger implied a will to hurt, and God could never will to do anything but good. " Philo held that God is never really angry, but only pretends to be angry in order to frighten sinners for their good. The later Christian writers followed more or less in the same strain.

II

We now turn to Mr. Edwyn Bevan himself. He asks:—"Can we, without absurd anthropomorphism, attribute anger to God." According to him, the question applies both to Anger and Love. But he says :—" If we believe that God is *truly* love, even though love as it exists in human beings has characteristics which cannot be attributed to God, then we cannot argue that anger is conceivable in God, simply because anger, as it exists in human beings, has characteristics which cannot be attributed to Him." Mr. Bevan holds that, in speaking of God, there is a legitimate and illegitimate anthropomorphism,—and that only the latter needs to be avoided. When we attribute a human passion to God, we can only, according to Mr. Bevan, legitimately do so if we regard it as existing in Him "without the limitations and accidents which circumscribe it in man ;" "when we attribute any of these limitations and accidents to Him, then we have illegitimate anthropomorphism." Mr. Bevan also strongly dissents from the view held by those who, in order to get rid of these difficulties regard Him as Impersonal. He says :—" As well describe him as being utterly unknown. If He is utterly unknown, a mere blank, you cannot even say that He exists. He would at any rate have no sort of existence of which we could take account. " Mr. Bevan also objects to the doctrine of Mr. Wells—one of those recent hypotheses of his about God, chameleon-like in their variety, coming in like a flood—that he

is to be regarded as "Impersonal Reason," or "Impersonal Purpose." Mr. Bevan writes :—"Reason and Purpose we know, and can conceive of as existing in a Person ; impersonal reason and impersonal purpose are really terms that mean nothing." We can certainly sympathise with this view, though we do not see why "terms which mean nothing" for us with our present knowledge may convey a truth with regard to God whose nature we do not *know*, but whose presence we may *feel* or *even experience* in a manner which we cannot express to others or quite understand, and make intelligible and *known* to ourselves. Mr. Bevan is not also himself consistent, though he complains of Mr. Wells' inconsistencies. For, he holds that, "while we cannot imagine what love means in the life of God, there is a common quality in virtue of which the love that exists in him and that which exists in us can rightly be classed together under the name of love." Similarly he holds, in regard to anger, there is an analogy between the anger of God and "anger at its best in man,"—an element which he defines as "a warm sense of moral unworth in the wrong action." He continues :—"Just as in human anger there is a desire to bring together doing and suffering, so in God's anger there must be the will that the connection should exist." Similarly in regard to love. Mr. Bevan, however, forgets that, while he is very logical in insisting that reason and purpose should, on the principle of analogy, be ascribed only to a Personal God, he cannot hold that neither anger, nor love can be ascribed to God, if, as he holds, "our imagination cannot reproduce what God's life is to him," and "we cannot imagine what love (and anger) means in the life of God."

III

The truth is that Western thinkers and theologians go on merely *speculating* about God and his relation to the Universe. In India, on the other hand, we have distinct *sources* of knowledge (*Pramanas*) for different

kinds of existences, and do not confound issues which are distinct. The Vedas are the authoritative sources of correct knowledge concerning the nature of God as the Supreme Being and his relation to the universe. We apply the methods of ratiocination only to establish the truth and consistency of the declarations contained in the Vedas, leaving to the practical methods of *Yoga* and *Jnana* to secure to us as *spiritual experience* what we cannot *know as thought* by our minds, or as *perception* by our senses. According to the Vedas—and the Itihasas and Puranas devised by the Rishis to illuminate what is dark in them—the Personal God has neither hatred nor even love, neither friends nor foes (see Gita, IX, 29),—for, He is One only and related in the same way to all beings like the light of the sun. He is near to the heart of His devotees, but distant to others,—even as the light of the sun shines in transparent, but not in opaque substances. As, in the latter case, the difference lies in the substances, not in the light of the sun, so, in the former case, the difference lies in men, not in the Lord. The significance is similar where Sri Krishna speaks of various devotees as dear to Him in various degrees (Gita, XII 13—17). The differences lie with the devotees, and the corresponding effects are different. The Brahma-Sutras of Vyasa also deny that there is any differential treatment (*Vaishamya*) or the quality of being compassionless (*Nairghranya*) in the Lord's relations to the world of life and form,—all being treated according to their Karmic deserts (Sutra 34 of II, 1). Sankaracharya adduces the further illustration of the God of Rain (*Parjanya*) :—“As Parjanya is the common cause of the production of rice, barley, and other plants, while the difference between the various species is due to the various ~~pr~~ ^{pot} ~~ent~~ ^{ential} ~~ities~~ ^{ities} hidden in the various seeds, so the Lord is the common cause of the creation of Gods, Men, etc. while the differences between these various classes of beings are due to the differences of merit belonging to the

individual souls." Sankara, in a note-worthy passage, continues :—" If we are asked how we come to know that the Lord creates the world, having regard to these various conditions, we reply that the Sruti is the source of all correct knowledge concerning what is beyond the faculties of sense-perception and the mind of man, and thus saves us from all merely arid speculation. " The question now raised,—Whether God, like men, has the emotion of anger and, if so, what is its nature and content,—is beside the point. The Brahma-Sutra (32), in the above connection, denies—following the Vedas—that the Lord has any purpose or motive (*Prayojana*) of his own in creating the Universe. Sankaracharya explains :—" That would be in conflict with the declaration of the Sruti that the Supreme Person has unlimited self-sufficiency (*Paritriptatvam*). " But, in that case, why—as Sankara asks—does he go through the tremendous exertion (*Gurutara-Samrambham*) of creating this extended universe of unlimited forms of being ? " The answer is contained in Sutra 33 :—" (The Lord's creative activity) is mere sport (*lila-kaivalyam*), as we see in the world. " Sankara explains :—" We see in the every-day life of the world certain activities of kings or ministers of kings who have no unfulfilled desires relating to the worldly possessions, but proceed from mere love of sport to indulge in various recreations and amusements. We also see that the process of inhalation and exhalation, is going on without reference to any extraneous purpose, merely following the law of its own nature. Analogously the activity of the Lord also may be supposed to be mere sport proceeding from the nature subject to Him (*Maya*, joined with time and Karma) and having no extraneous purpose. "

In this connection we have also to refer to the Vedic doctrine of Avatara (descent into the world of form and personality) contained in the Gita (IV. 7—8). The Lord's aim in making an avatara is stated as follows :—" The protection of the good, the destruction of the doers

of wickedness, and the establishment of Dharma (righteousness).” Krishna also informs us (IV. 9) that His body and His acts are unlike those of ordinary men,—*i. e.*, they have not a merely material origin, but are spiritual and divine (*divya*). In Chapter IX., 11, he also points out, “because he was working with a (seemingly) human form, people, who did not know that He was the Supreme Being Himself, treated Him with disdain.” The meaning is that though He *seemed* to others to have a human form owing to the exercise of His power of Maya on the minds of all, He did not cease to be the Supreme Being, untouched by matter and free from all egotistic attachment to the deeds He wrought or the resulting fruits affecting the lives and destinies of all living beings on earth. For these very reasons, also, He clearly could not have any of the emotions of human beings,—though He *seemed* to have such emotions, even as He seemed to have a human form and to engage in activities like men. Here is the *Vedic* solution of the problem of “the anger of God,”—*viz.*, that, even though God may *seem*, from our point of view, to have anger or other emotions and to engage in activities with the form of a human being He is not at all in truth associated with such a form or with emotions and activities corresponding to it. Hence, Mr. Bevan’s speculations in regard to the ingredients common to the anger (or love) of God and the anger (or love) of man are simply futile. The truth is that, in framing our religious doctrine, we do not always sufficiently realise that we live in a world where the operation of law is universal,—a world of *Rachana*, of orderly evolution, to use the language of Vyasa in the Brahma-Sutras. In ascribing human emotions, activities, attachments to the Creator, man wants to transfer the blame and responsibility for the consequences of his own actions from his own shoulders to the former. The attempt, however, proves a failure. For, we have shown that God cannot, in any sense, be said to be the will-

ing author of any pain by way of retributive chastisement, or even of any extra reward, except what each individual obtains as the inevitable effect of his voluntary action upon the material universe. Anger, righteous or unrighteous, is an element only in the human character, not in the divine. If it is only *ascribed* by man to God, it is due to the circumstance that he judges of the attributes of God from the *analogy* of what he finds in the personality of man as compounded of both good and evil. The best of men are unable to get rid of the long-established and ingrained bias of anthropomorphism (or even of animism). Analogy has been a huge factor in the development of religion. Even the Vedas, as we have above said, resort to analogy in order to render religion in all its stages intelligible to those who come within the range of their influence and according to the measure of their opportunities and capacities. But the Vedas unfailingly and at every step, declare the highest doctrine concerning the essential nature of God as the one Innermost Supreme Reality of the Bliss (Ananda) without a second, so that mere analogies regarding God and His relation to the universe,—drawn from the conception we have formed of an organism or mechanism, and still more from the ethical and spiritual ideas of Him which have been framed by thinking minds among various communities, such as God being judge, father, mother, king residing in a capital city like Vaikuntha, Kailasa, etc.,—have no vital and real bearing on his essential nature, but relate to what his Personality is *conceived* to be under the energising operation or exercise of his power of Maya. Sankara says :—"The highest Lord also may, when so inclined, assume a bodily shape formed of Maya, in order that His grace may flow towards His devout worshippers (*sadhaka—anugrahartha*) " ; " for the purposes of devout meditation, a special abode may be assigned to Brahman, although it abides in its own glory only ; as Brahman is, like ether, all-pervading, it may be viewed as being the

innermost self of all ; the statement, finally, about the limitation of Brahman's omnipotence, etc., might be conceived as having reference to the requirements of devout meditation only." That God, as absolute Brahman or even as the Supreme Lord of the Universe of Maya, has no form or attributes, need not be stated. It is through the veil of matter (*Maya, Prakriti*)—his own, that of which he is master (*Gita, IV-6*)— that he gets related to the manifested world where the universal law of cause and effect is in operation, and, through that relation becomes a Personality, becomes the Universal Lord (*Parameswara*). Isvara has no form except what he has to assume, no attributes except what are implied and required, for the purposes of the universe and its working adjustments in accordance with the Law of Karma.

K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR.

MISCONCEPTION ABOUT VEDANTA REMOVED.*

SWAMI TURIYANANDA

I have not thrown Vedanta to the winds. Vedanta is not a thing to be thrown aside ; on the contrary, it is our heart's treasure. But the question is, what is that Vedanta. You have given a very nice analysis of the thing, to which I have nothing to add. 'This much is sure, none worships matter—the symbol of 'Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute' is the chosen Ideal and object of worship of all classes of worshipers—that is all, I should say. It is the ritualists, having desire that pray for heaven and other objects of enjoyment.

“ ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना
गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥ ”

Having enjoyed the vast Swarga-world, they enter the mortal world, on the exhaustion of their merit : Thus, abiding by the injunctions of the three (Vedas), desiring desires, they (constantly) come and go.

This is for the ritualists, who perform sacrifice etc., so, you see, heaven, etc., is not the *summum bonum* of worshippers—not to speak of the 'Jnanis'. Now the problem turns about 'Atman,' which is spirit, and Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute. Now the worshippers look upon this 'Atman' or 'Brahman' only as object of worship, from different view-points according to the impressions of their past life. Some look upon It as whole, of which they form parts and others think themselves inseparate from That; whereas there are some who think It to be Great Lord and themselves separate individuals. But this class of people also do not think themselves to be matter, but spirit. So, we see, nowhere

is worshipper stated as matter. Both worshipper and worshipped are spirits and only they are seen in different lights according to the past impressions of people. There is a very nice story about Sri Ramachandra and Hanuman which will not be out of place to mention here. It runs thus—once in an assembly of sages and saints, Sri Ramachandra asked the following question to Hanuman, in order to satisfy all classes of his devotees.—“From what standpoint do you see me?” Hanuman, “the wisest of the wise” thought within himself on this—‘when my Lord who knows the hearts of all has asked this question, certainly there is a deeper purpose underlying it’ and, then, said—

देहबुद्ध्या दासोऽस्मि ते त्रीवबुद्ध्या त्वदंशकः ।

आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहं इति मे निश्चिन्तामतिः ॥

So long I have got the body consciousness, I am your servant, when I feel myself as an individual soul, I am a part of you and when I realise, I am Atman, there is no difference between you and me,—that is my firm conviction.

By this Hanuman has expressed the feelings of all classes of worshippers and this is the final conclusion of all Vedanta. To none, it sounds a note of despair, on the contrary it has given respective places due to all individuals. For those, who have not gone above the body idea is prescribed the attitude of servant—‘Thou art the Lord—I am Thy servant. Those who, having risen above this stage of body consciousness, cannot realise the idea of Infiniteness, take to the attitude of a ‘part to the whole’ —“Thou are whole, I am ‘Thy part.” And those who have realised themselves as ‘Atman’ feel the idea of inseparateness—“I and ‘Thou art the same” —there is no difference there. This describes the three stages—dualism, qualified monism and monism. In order to please all classes of devotees, present in the assembly, Sri Ramachandra has got three stages of Truths described through

the lips of Sri Hanuman. The truths of Vedanta have been dealt in the nicest way here.

Let none despair. Whatever stage a man may hold, he is worshipping that Great One and is related to Him only.

“ सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो
मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैर्ग्रहमेव वंशो
वेदान्नकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम ॥ ”

I am centred in the hearts of all ; memory and perception as well as their loss come from Me. I am verily that which has to be known by all the Vedas, I indeed am the author of the Vedanta, and the knower of the Veda am I.

That great all-pervasive Being and Intelligence exists in all, within and without. He is the knowable of the Vedas—author of the Vedanta and knower of the Vedas. To realise this is to understand Vedanta. Unless one realise this, one knows nothing about truth, though he knows by rote all the scriptures on Vedanta. I have understood it this way. Also the words of Guru Maharaj that “ I and my Mother exist,” I take in this light—he has not spoken of matter. All is spirit—“ worshipped is spirit ; as also worshipper—attitude of a child, who knows nothing except the mother—one-pointed love” she is all. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita :—

Or what avails thee to know all this diversity, O Arjun ? (Know thou this that) I exist, supporting this whole world by a portion of Myself.
It is sung even in the Vedas—

The whole universe constitutes His one-fourth part and the remaining three parts rest in heaven eternally free.

This is with regard to Brahman. With regard to created beings—as long as they have the body-consciousness, they are the servant of the Great Lord : When the consciousness that they are individual souls arises, they form the part of the whole—which is He. And when they realise that they are the Atman, and all sense of difference ceases, they become one with that infinite soul and say—“I am only Thou”—and all idea of individuality is merged in Him. This is the truth of the Vedanta admitted on all hands. He is all. There is nothing as knowledge, knower and knowable excepting He. Atman, individual soul and world everything is He. There is nothing but He. He, who believes in the existence of anything excepting He, is still in delusion—he is like one, who talks under the influence of sleep and does not know what he talks.

“अध्यारोपापवादाभ्यां निष्प्रपञ्चं प्रपञ्चते”

With superimposition we call that world which does not exist when the superimposition is taken off. From this view-point has ‘Shruti’ said :

“एतस्मान् आत्मनः आकाशः सम्भूतः”

“Out of this Atman has come ether and so on.”
Otherwise there is no creation in fact.

“न निरोधो नचोपपत्तिर्न वद्धो न च सायकः ।

न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्तो इत्येषा परमार्थता ॥”

“There is nothing as creation or dissolution—none in bondage—none in struggle or willing to be free and even none as free—that is the ultimate truth.”

That is the conclusion. What new thing will Shankar say about *samipya* and *salokya* (the state of living near or in the same region with God) which some aspirants long to have after death. You know Lord has said in the Bhagavata. “Though I offer, there is a kind of devotees, who will not want anything except services to me.” Nobody says that studying the Scripture,

telling the beads, austerity, contemplation, meditation or samadhi, either is the ultimate goal.

“ तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति
नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय । ”

By knowing Him only one overcomes death, there is no other way to freedom. 'This is the message of Vedanta. Sri Krishna, also, has said in the words of the Gita :

“ आब्रह्मभुवनल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्मन विद्यते ॥ ”
“ अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ ”
“ गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ ’

(All) worlds including the world of Brahma are subject to returning again, O Arjun ; but on reaching Me, O son of Kunti, there is no rebirth.

I am the self, O Gudakesa, seated in the heart of all beings ; I am the beginning and the middle, as also the end, of all beings.

I am the Goal, the Sustainer, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Shelter and the Friend, the Origin, Dissolution and Stay, the Treasure-house, the Seed Imperishable.

So it need not be emphasised that He is the be-all and end-all of all created beings. On coming in an orchard to eat mangoes, one should be particular only about that. What is the necessity of other particulars ? Only those, whom the Lord chooses as 'teachers' will worry themselves about the affairs of others to know what kind of religion will suit whom. We shall feel satisfied if we only get mangoes. May God help you to meet with the "owner of the orchard" is the earnest prayer of

SWAMI TURIYANANDA.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Psychologists tell us that the human mind possesses three faculties—the rational, the emotional and the volitional. All these faculties must be strengthened and developed harmoniously, if they are to serve the purpose for which they have been created, because nature has her own economy and man is not to thwart her plan and purpose. If one of the mental faculties were to become atrophied for want of proper exercise and the others alone allowed to grow, the result will be the inharmonious and lop-sided development of the human personality. All the faculties require suitable and uniform development, as all the limbs and parts of the human body require proportionate growth which can result only from the process of functioning allotted to them. The person who has developed his reason and ignored his emotional and volitional powers is as much a monstrosity from the psychological point of view as the man whose limbs are disproportionate and lack in beauty of symmetry and form.

It is most lamentable that modern educationists have neither given the all-sided development of man's faculties an adequate place in schemes of education, or even sufficiently recognised its great value. Reason is the only element in man which is nurtured, if nurtured it can be called, not on any original thoughts which are attempted to be provoked in the minds of the students, but on mere bookish knowledge which is often second-hand. Had the intellectual faculty of our young men been developed, as they should have been, on sound and healthy lines, by giving it not more than the maximum it can assimilate and thus enabling it to digest its materials, we would have had, not merely

men who, even after leaving the portals of educational institutions, are complacently satisfied with an intellectual conservatism and running along the same old groove cut by their University men, but many great original thinkers thirsting for new knowledge, seeking new fields of thought, and contributing in a large measure to the world's treasures in science, mathematics and so forth. And if a well-developed reason be turned inward and combined with deep introspection, it is sure to achieve wonderful triumphs in the realms of higher mystical thought, religion, ethics and philosophy.

If the rational faculty of our boys and young men in schools and colleges is ill-fed and ill-nourished, their faculties of volition and emotion are entirely starved. Emotion or love is seen everywhere in nature. Whatever in society is good and great and sublime is the outcome of the working of this love, and whatever is bad and even diabolical is also the working of this same love, with the difference that it is ill-directed. Emotion can take various forms like love of self, individuals, and possessions, love of family and clan, community and country, and love also of humanity in general. This emotion will have to be carefully strengthened and extended from the smaller sphere of its working to the larger spheres, and purified by removing the encrustations of selfishness and narrowness into which it may get itself enmeshed from time to time. A man's emotional faculty cannot be educated unless it is directed in proper channels during the different stages of his growth and development. A man may love his family, his kith and kin, his properties and possessions, but if his love be not guided along useful and humanitarian lines, he is liable to become avaricious and selfish, callous to the feelings of his fellow-men and indifferent to their needs. Such a man may fail to love even his community and much less love his country or humanity, and in a similar manner, love of one's people and country is very laudable, but if it is not mellowed into universal love and sympathy for all mankind, there is the danger of its degenerating into a self-aggrandising nationalism with the national motto, "Each nation unto itself and let the devil take the hindmost."

Immense and various are the opportunities of guiding the emotions of our young men. We all know how strongly they feel for and appreciate beauty in all its forms and various manifestations. Which boy or young man would not like a beautiful flower or a running brook, a rainbow in the sky or the stars in the blue, the dulcet charms of music or the silent symphony of art? To everyone of us, "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever;" everyone of us has the sense of the beautiful, only it has to be made deeper, stronger, intenser, and in the process of intensifying and strengthening it, we should take every precaution to divest it of its base sensuousness, its tendency to dwell on mere matter, by nipping its evil aspect in the bud. If this love of the beautiful expresses itself through the charms of sound, symmetry of form, and rhythm of poetry, there will be a glorious renaissance in the country. And when a person's emotional faculty rises, by being gradually metamorphosed, into a passion for something supersocial and supersensual, into something above man, matter, or nature, he realises the very essence of beauty which is divinity. But it must be borne in mind that the education and proper guidance of the emotions is impossible, if it is not begun early in life; the earlier begun the better, for the mind is more plastic and susceptible to feelings when young, and any emotion, whatever be its nature, good or bad, leaves an indelible impression upon the young when it expresses itself in all its strength. Not a single man has achieved success in anything which has not been a dream and a passion all his life, from boyhood till death. When the period of boyhood passes into the period of adolescence, the mind finds it difficult to follow its favourite pursuits, and when a young man following the conventions of society around him enters into life with all its paraphernalia, its social duties, fixed rules and routines and various calls, he ceases to be a master of his time and valuable inclinations.

The volitional faculty of our young persons shares the same fate as their emotions. Far more important and valuable than the strengthening of the emotions is the strengthening of the will. What are our average

boys from schools and young men from colleges but emaciated and moving spectres, possessing no strength of mind, no will of their own? Does not the history of India for the past one thousand years show that every province in the country has been the weakest in will, has been worsted in all its struggles, has been a prey to depredators from without? Where can we point out to manifestations of Kshatravirya, of physical prowess, of strength of will and power of action, in Indian life to-day? In fact, the much-boasted Kshatriya with his might and valour is no more. The organising power which created great kingdoms and powerful empires in India is no more. Nor do we find in the country to-day the richness of life, the vivacity of energy, and the push and pluck and enterprise which come of genuine national prosperity and national vigour. And why? The answer is to be found in want of will, want of grit, want of organising power. Will-power is badly needed therefore. But along with the strengthening of the will is required its thorough purification; for a man of strong but ill-used will can do more positive harm than a man of comparatively weak will. What is the sacking and pillage of one country by another but the result of mis-directed though organised will and is it not true that nearly four-fifths of the globe have been under the thumb of a body of men of organised will? But the people of India should never imitate other nations. The Indian nation must assimilate the lessons they have to give it, but should, on no account, give up its individuality. It must become strong and powerful, not for mere pleasure of power, but for standing on its own legs and living its real life which is spiritual. "It is good to have a giant's strength, though not to use it like a giant."

Men of heroic will and heroic deeds are the Supreme need of the hour. Such heroes will build the country. Such heroes will work out its destiny. Such heroes will be its saviours. Our country in its present economic, social, educational and other conditions requires the sacrifice of several hundreds of such heroes. They must have undaunted energy. They must have undaunted will-power. Can't we remove the illiteracy of the masses in

India in a few months if the unemployed graduates and under-graduates of today band themselves together to form an organisation, and give the three R's to every peasant? Can't we improve likewise the sanitation of the country in the course of a month? What is wanted is the will for work. As words inspiring his fellowmen with courage, the great Swami Vivekananda used to say: "Have faith in yourself first, that is the way. Have faith in yourself—all power is within you—be conscious, and bring it out. Say 'I can do everything.' 'Even the poison of a snake is powerless if you can firmly deny it.' Beware! No saying 'nay,' No negative thoughts! Say 'Yea, Yea,' 'Soham! Soham!'—'I am He! I am He!'"

"What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature. O mighty one, and this whole universe will be at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates and not matter?"

"To work with undaunted energy. What fear! Who is powerful enough to thwart you!"

"We shall crush the stars to atoms, and unhinge the universe. Don't you know who we are? We are the servants of Sri Ramakrishna. Fear! Whom to fear, forsooth!" "What I want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel, inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is made. Strength, manhood, kshatracarya and Brahma Teja"—so the Swami wrote to one of his disciples. These words breathing the fire of courage and fervour of spirit reveal the man himself. Who among those who have come into contact with him has failed to catch a ray of the all-consuming fire of apostolic fervour which was burning within him? Once remarked a religious propagandist whose religious opinions and Swamiji's were as poles apart: "How many of us would not give their lives in order to have a worker like Swami Vivekananda?" Indeed, without such heroes as the Swamiji wanted, the country will be progressing at a snail's pace. Would to God there were institutions scattered throughout the country to train up such heroes, such Karma Yogins, whose strength would lie in their purity, in their selflessness, and would come of touching the feet of God!

NEWS AND REPORTS

Our readers are already aware of the fact that Swami Shivanandaji, our President, has been spending the summer in the Nilgiri Hills. His presence there has been made use of by the devotees of the place. On the 22nd June His Holiness was invited by the members of the Sri Ramakrishna Hermitage of Ootacamund. The members of the Hermitage as well as those of Sri Manikavasaga Bhakta Sabha, presented His Holiness with addresses to which he made suitable replies.

His Holiness Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, who has been staying at Coonoor for the past two months was invited by the public of Ootacamund to inaugurate the construction of a mandiram at the station where the Swamis of the Mission will reside and carry on its propaganda of religious teaching and social service. As a preliminary, a public meeting was held on Sunday the 6th instant at the Anjuman premises when Mr. B. Rama Rao, the leading Vakil of the station, presided. Swami Srivasananda, one of the members of the Mission, explained to the audience the aims and objects of the Mission and its activities in various parts of the world. The meeting resolved to establish a monastery and mandiram as a branch of the mission and to request the president graciously to accept the offer. An influential committee representative of all communities was formed to carry out the objects of the meeting. Mr. Tiruvengadam Pillai, a member of the washermen community, generously offered, as a free gift, a plot of land in Bishop's Down measuring two acres, situated on the ridge above 'Baikie' property. It commands an excellent view of the Lawrence Asylum valley on the southern side and the Ootacamund Race Course on the northern and is well suited for an asylum, being at the same time within easy reach of the town. Mr. Mandaram Rangiah Chetty, a merchant of Madras, has offered to build other portions of the Mandiram at a cost of Rs. 2,000. Many leading men of the station have undertaken to build other portions of the Mandiram or have subscribed liberally.

INAUGURATION CEREMONY.

On the 11th instant, the 'Graharambham' or the inauguration ceremony was performed on the site with Homam, vedic chanting and other due religious rites. His Holiness the President amidst shouts of

"Sri Gurumaharajki Jai" turned the first sod for excavating the foundation with a silver pickaxe presented to him for the purpose. Much enthusiasm prevailed.

AN ADDRESS.

An address to His Holiness was read by Mr. Rama Rao, the President of the Committee. The address in welcoming His Holiness to the Queen of Hill stations stated that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna had been studied by the public with much profits for several years past. The names of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda had become household words in these parts they being worshipped with devoutness and reverence by several amongst them. The Committee felt extremely happy to receive His Holiness as the first President of the Mission who had visited Ootacamund and felt proud of the Mission's activities for the establishment of religion in its non-sectarian and universal basis all over the world even in so far off America and Europe, spreading the teachings of the Gospel of Peace and Love. They noticed the Mission's glorious work of establishing Sevashramas or dispensaries for the sick in holy places as Hardwar, Benares and Brindavan as boons to pilgrims and of initiating and creating a band of Sadhus and Brahmacharins who had been leading a life of renunciation and service commanding universal respect.

A similar address was also presented by the leading Badagas of several villages in the vicinity and special songs composed in Tamil for the occasion were also sung.

PRESIDENT'S REPLY.

His Holiness felt deeply touched by the earnestness of the public of Ootacamund in organising a separate branch of the Mission for the Hills and expressed great pleasure that the teachings of the Mission and its activities had so impressed the public mind that they translated into action their desire to open an asramam in the lovely city and consecrate it to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He acknowledged with gratitude the generous offers of assistance on behalf of religion and service of humanity, especially the spontaneous gift of Mr. Tiruvengadam Pillai. He was glad to find that every arrangement had been made to begin the work of construction of the Asramam at an early date, and that an influential committee was in charge of the work. He fervently prayed that with the invaluable blessing of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna, this Asramam would, for many a long year, continue the noble work of revitalising the eternal principles of righteousness and purity preached by every religion and lead the modern world along the path of universal brotherhood towards the attainment of everlasting knowledge and bliss.

SWAMI BODHANANDA

The members of the Vedanta Society have sent the following letter of appreciation to Swami Bodhananda :—

VEDANTA SOCIETY,

34, West 71st Street,

New York (America).

Swami Bodhananda

Dear Sir,

Your students assembled at the annual meeting of the Vedanta Society had the joy of hearing read the address of welcome that had been presented to you in India, appreciative of your long and unceasing labour in this country. There was instant response from the meeting, in its wanting to do something in some way to express its appreciation of your long and unceasing labour in this Society. It was decided we write to you. We realise dear Swami, all of us more or less, that you have given to us knowledge through your preaching the Vedanta Philosophy and in your living the life of the Vedanta teaching, sincerely and sweetly, in New York City. You have set before us an example. How can we reasonably express the gratitude and loving appreciation that we feel? Is it not our endeavouring to live up to our better light, by putting into practice that what we have heard and seen along the path of Vedanta? We think this is what you would wish; this would express in some degree the appreciation of our friend and Master.

We are, dear Swami,

Your students,

The members of the Vedanta Society.

P. S.—You will have heard from the Swami Raghavananda, that we have inquired of you right on your journeys.

(SD.) ADA L. STUART,

Secretary.

Swami Bodhanandaji of the New York Vedanta Society during his stay in Madras delivered a very interesting lecture on "Indian Spirituality and American Practicality" in the Sri Satchidananda Sangham and another lecture on "American Life" in the Ramakrishna Students' Home where also he gave a short sermon on the occasion of Buddha Deva's anniversary. He also spoke on the Sri Sankara Jayanti at the Ananda Asram, Vepery, on "Tatvam Asi." After spending more than a month in Madras the Swami was invited to Bangalore where he spent another month. During his stay there he delivered two public lectures besides holding classes every Sunday at our Asrama. The citizens of Bangalore presented him with a farewell address on the 27th June in the Ratnavali Theatre. There was a representative gathering present. Rao Saheb Mr. Chinnaiya read an address, a copy of which printed in parchment and enclosed in a neat sandalwood casket was presented to the Swamiji. Swami Bodhanandaji gave a very suitable reply to this address. At the invitation of Swami Somananda of the Mission who is doing preaching work amongst the prisoners of the jail, the Swami visited the jail and was immensely pleased at the nature of the work done there. The prisoners presented him with an address. On the 29th June, the Swami came back to Madras and spending a few more days here, he left for Bombay. On the 15th of this month, the Swami has sailed back to America. On his way he will be halting in the Continent and will be visiting Italy, Switzerland and France. We all wish him *bon voyage*.

YOGANANDA ASRAM.

Our readers will be glad to learn that through the kindness of Mr. P. G. Govinda Pillay of Alleppey an Asrama situated in a fine cocoanut grove was handed over to the Mission. Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji opened the Asram after performing consecration ceremonies. The Asrama is named "Sri Yogananda Asram." The office of the vernacular magazine, "Prabhuddha Keralam," has been shifted from Trivandram to this centre. We wish all success to the work.

A DONATION.

We have great pleasure in announcing a donation of Rs. 150 for the *Vedanta Kesari* from Mr. A. L. T. Mudaliar, c/o Combes Co., Post Box No. 107, Rangoon.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar. ”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman. ’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER
TOTA PURI.

SWAMI SARADANANDA

THE place of birth of Tota Puri most probably was somewhere in the west part of India and the history of his early childhood is wrapt in obscurity. Personally I have heard anything of it from the Master himself, but it is most probable he himself did not know anything of it. It is considered a strict etiquette with the sannyasins not to speak anything of their previous lives. Subsequent to the passing away of the Master, when his sannyasin disciples were travelling in Western India they came to learn from some of the old Paramahansas of those parts that Tota Puri belonged to some place in the Punjab side and, he took to the life of a sannyasin at an early age. The place of his guru was at Ludhiana, near Delhi and his guru was a celebrity for his spiritual attainments. Further, it was gathered that Tota Puri, after the demise of his Guru became the head of his Guru's monastery. Even to-day an annual festival is held in honour of his Guru near his sepulchre.

As it has been mentioned before that Tota belonged to the Naga sect and there used to be about 700 Nagas in the *mandali* of the following of Tota's Math. The

Master used to tell us now and then of the method of sadhana observed in the Math of Tota, as an instance of how a novice should be taken step by step through the different stages of rigour and discipline of spiritual life. He often told us, "Nangta used to say that there were nearly 700 Nagas in his association. It was the custom among them that the beginners in the spiritual practices were made to sit upon a soft cushion and meditate, lest if seated on a hard floor, it might stiffen their legs and cause pain. At the beginning when mind is not trained in meditation, least physical pain goes only to distract the mind from God to the body. But as the mind used to get accustomed to meditation and disciplined by the practice, the cushions of the seat used to be removed and the meditation was made to sit gradually upon harder stuff.

Ultimately he is allowed to sit on a mat or even upon a rough floor. The same kind of discipline used to be observed in regard to food and other necessities of life, the degree of rigour and abstinence increasing gradually step by step. Besides also the disciples were practised to throw off their garments one by one and become gradually naked, and so ultimately they could keep their body absolutely bare in all seasons. Perhaps it would shock the conventionality of modern civilisation to hear how nakedness could be associated with spiritual culture. The modern civilised man has made a fetish of his dress and it looks as if he is determined to sacrifice his soul on the altar of this idolatry. But different was the idea that moved the ancient cult of the Nagas, and the Paramahansas, to relinquish all their dress while in search of God. Bashfulness, hatred, fear, vanity or birth, prejudice of caste, prestige of culture, consciousness of public esteem, these are the eight fold meshes in which the soul of a man is caught and trammelled from the very moment of his birth, and truly indeed its emancipation lies

in unmeshing itself from these aforesaid bondages one by one. Therefore the seeker of spiritual light and soul's freedom has to throw off gradually all these eight things. Next, when the disciple used to be somewhat well established in the practice of meditation, he had to itenerate, at first in the company of other sadhus, but afterwards all alone, from place to place through all the sacred places of pilgrimage of the land. Such were the disciplines among the members of that Naga brotherhood. They had also a beautiful custom for electing the head of their brotherhood. We heard from the Master that whenever the office of the *Mahanta* (the president of the brotherhood) would fall vacant, the members would see who among them had attained the stage of a true Paramahansa, and such a one only would be installed on the *gadi*. For, along with the installation would come much wealth and power into his hands and if the man had not attained real *vairagya* and spiritual insight of things, his mind might get corrupted by the possession and so might mis-use both the power and wealth entrusted into his hand. But a Paramahansa having not the least attachment or ambition or axes of his own to grind, can fruitfully utilise the wealth and power for the good of the members of the brotherhood.

As it is chiefly prevalent among the members of the Naga community Tota was a strict follower of the Gnana path ; and it is quite likely that being brought up from his early age in the rigorous discipline of self mastery and self-abnegation and constantly practised to look upon the transcendental Brahman as the only reality of life worth having, and all the objects of the universe including even all soft relation-ship of life as *maya* false, he could not appreciate the feelings and emotions that moved a true devotee to worship his Lord according to the path of Bhakti. His powerful while mind considered it an abject weakness of human mind to look upon God

as anything separate from his own inner self and consequently show devotion to Him. The realm of *maya* extended according to him from the multiplicity of this universe up to the dual consciousness of God and his devotees. And naturally he had no sympathy for such weakness of human mind which created an unreal duality of worshippers and worshipped and established a false relationship of devotion between them—so, he discarded the whole process at one stroke as the work of *maya*. But although he had the vision of the transcendental Brahman in its absolute purity, yet he had still to learn the great fact that Brahman and the Brahmi Sakti whom he denounced as unreal *maya* are one and the same; that the reality, or the Absolute Brahman may be true in the state of the *Absolute* consciousness of the *Samadhi*, yet the truth of *maya* has to be acknowledged in all its potency during the states of the relative consciousness. Perhaps it was the will of the Providence that he should complete his knowledge of the Truth by knowing this aspect of the reality also. So, he was made to come to Dakshineswar to learn the same from his own disciple whom he came to teach in another way. We would presently tell our readers how it came to pass.

SOME REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATHS AND MONKS*

SWAMI BODHANANDA.

THIS will be a rather personal affair, nevertheless interesting to tell you how I first came into contact with the work which has been started since the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. It was in 1890 that we formed a small group of students among ourselves --most of them, my class mates. We were about eighteen in number and some of them became swamies, viz., Vimalananda, Virajananda, Atmananda, Prakashananda and Suddhananda and myself. We used to meet together in the houses of some of our friends and talk over religious matters. That year we were studying for our F. A. Virajananda, Vimalananda, Atmananda and myself were students of the same class. In the month of August we heard that Sri Ramakrishna's *Thirobhava Utsab* will be celebrated at Kankurgachi. Sri Ramachandra Dutt was the owner of that Samadhi Mandir. This gentleman was a distant relative of Swami Vivekananda. He was a great devotee of the Master. He used to celebrate the *Mahasamadhi* anniversary of the Master, unlike us who celebrate the birthday. Hearing of this celebration, one afternoon I went alone, all the way to Kankurgachi without speaking a word about this, to my friends. It was 12 o'clock when I arrived there. The date of the Utsab was a couple of days hence ; but, throughout that day I expected to be some celebration or other. I was introduced to Ramababu. He received me very kindly and asked me many questions, what I was, whether I was a student, etc. To each of the questions I gave my appropriate answer. He then asked

*During his recent stay in Madras Swami Bodhananda held some *conversations* in the R. K. Math, Madras. This is an extract from the notes taken on the occasion.

my opinion about Sri Ramakrishna, whether I had seen him. I replied, 'No, I have only heard of him'—"what do you think of him?" I replied that he was a great Siddha Mahapurusha. He did not like my remark. You know, he was a bigoted follower of Sri Ramakrishna. So he at once began to explain to me how Ramakrishna was an incarnation of Vishnu. His argument was that if Ramakrishna was not so he would not have expressed all the divine powers he had manifested. He also disclosed to me some incidents of a personal nature—how he got his own *mantram* in dream, how he told Sri Ramakrishna about it and Sri Ramakrishna confirmed it and told him "yes, that is your *mantram*." He counted this *mantram* for several months and one day when he came to Sri Ramakrishna, he asked him to return his *mantram*. Sri Ramakrishna touched him on his chest and said that, he had, from that day forwards, taken all his disciples, responsibility on his own shoulders. I remember now one more incident Rambabu told me. Rambabu was taking some *Jilipi* (sweets) to Guru Maharaj. As he was going to Dakshineswar a young boy came up to him and Ram Babu gave him one or two pieces. When he came to the Master, Sri Ramakrishna could not touch the sweets—You know the Master could not touch any food which had been first tasted by others first. Now the Master knew what had transpired and so he could not take the *Uchchistam*. He told me many other things. It was 6-30 p.m. and darkness was setting in. As Ram Babu came home he offered me a seat in his carriage. On our way he told me about the coming anniversary. I spoke to his group of friends. He welcomed them too. I went home and told my friends about the day's events. They were all surprised beyond all measure. That night we were all so delighted. We were so jubilant at the idea that Sri Ramakrishna was the Incarnation of this age and that we were all shortly going to witness a festival, to be celebrated in his

honour. We felt, as if, we knew Sri Ramakrishna from a very long time. That night we spent in talking about our forthcoming visit. We decided to buy some things to be offered in the temple. As we had no money, we went to different people. Some gave us pies, some rice. We sold the rice and used the money to buy sweets. In this connection we went to Iswar Chandar Vidyasagar, famous for his charities. We had a hope that he would give us some money. But we were disappointed. Perhaps, he thought that we, young boys, were going to be spoiled in this way. He scolded us saying that we were students and so should mind our studies first. If we want to serve Mahatmas, we must work ourselves and earn the money and not beg it out. He did not give us any money. However with what little we had, we bought mangoes and sweets and went to the temple. We saw Ram Babu about 8 p. m. Afterwards there was keertan. He was very delighted to see us. He told us how he first heard of Sri Ramakrishna. He had seen an article in a Brahmo paper regarding Sri Guru Maharaj. We were fortunate to hear some more reminiscences of the Master. That day we saw a young man, a relation of Ram Babu going into samadhi. With the progress of the keertan, he became outwardly unconcious. This was the first time we saw what is meant by *Bhava*, practically before us. We had our supper at 10 p. m. and then we all walked back home that night. The public *Utsab* came the next day. There was a big procession from Simla to Kangurgachi—three miles off—A keertan was accompanying the procession. The Keertan ~~series~~ ^{parties} are got up after many days rehearsal. But we ~~w~~ ^{held} the party without any preparations. The ~~rehearsal~~ ^{rehearsal} that we spoiled the whole performance in a ~~way~~ ^{way}. At Kankugachi, there was dancing and singing. The sight was worth seeing. That day there was service, Bhog and Aratrikam, and we partook of the Prasadam before we left the place.

We were students of the Rippon College. M.— (Sj. Mahendra Nath Gupta, the author of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) was a professor in that college. We saw him one day in the college at his leisure hour. He began to talk to us about Sri Ramakrishna. He told us for the first time that instead of going to Ram Babu, we must frequent the residence of the sannyasin disciples of the Master. We had heard about them from Ram Babu, but he did not talk kindly of them. He did not like the sannyas ideal. He believed that Sri Ramakrishna came to this world to emulate the true house-holder's life. Ram Babu thought he understood the Master more than the sannyasin disciples: for he knew Sri Ramakrishna many years before they had met him. M. compared Ram Babu to an ordinary mango but ripe; but the sannyasins though not ripe but when ripe will be very delicious. He told us that if we must see Sri Ramakrishna's spirit working in a living form, we must see these sannyasin disciples. He promised to take us to them. M. used to spend his holidays with the Sadhus. One afternoon we accompanied him there. I saw Swami Ramakrishnanandaji. You know, he had never for once left the service of the Master and stuck to the spot, even when all his comrades had gone on pilgrimage to different parts of India. He was very vigilant about his daily worship. We were four—Virajananda, Vimalananda, Atmananda and myself. Ramakrishnanandaji asked us what we will do. Hearing that we are students, he asked us not to neglect our studies. He quoted to us, the saying of Sri Ramakrishna,— *Buddhi-Suddhi*. He examined us on these subjects. He gave us *Prasad*. He also gave us some *Pran*. When we were ushered in to the shrine, we were in an atmosphere simply transporting—so holy. The shrine room was a very small one. The picture of Sri Guru Maharaj was on the bed. In front of the bedstead was his *paduka* and *kauta*, containing his ashes. We saluted them. Swami Ramakrishnanandaji

prayed to Guru Māharaj to bless us, that our bondages may be cut off. From that day we began to visit the Math. Sometimes M. used to take us in his own carriage M. had told us that even if the swamis asked us to go away, we should not do so, we must go on visiting them continuously. We should seek opportunities to do them some personal services, as shampooing them, or preparing *chilum* of tobaccoes for them to smoke, or run on errands for them. As we began to visit the Math, Swami Ramakrishnanandaji allowed us some privileges. When the day is too hot, he would ask us to take the fan and fan Sri Guru Maharaj. What a wonderful spectacle it was to see Swami Ramakrishnanandaji serving the Master. Day and night the swami had no other thought but that of his Lord. If he felt hot, he would get up and fan Sri Guru Maharaj. In fact to him, the Master was a living personality, who could be seen, felt and served. His services were very simple. He would get up at 4 A. M. and washing his hands and changing his clothes, he would enter the shrine, raise up the curtain from the bedstead and rouse the Lord from His sleep. He would then offer water for washing. Then the *bhog* consisting of a few cocoanut laddus will be offered; next tobacco to smoke was offered. He would then sweep the room. He never allowed even his Gurubbais to help him. Next, he would collect flowers for worship and then go to the bazar for buying vegetables. He would select the best the market could offer. He himself would dress the vegetables for cooking. Then he would go for his bath in the Ganges. When he would return back to the Math, he would carry with him a pitcher of the Holy water for Pooja. He would then sit for worship; it was very simple—a few flowers devotionally offered. After the Pooja, *bhog* and *prasadam* will be given. After the *bhog* the *prasadam* will be distributed. Now and then would give us the privilege of preparing *chandanam*.
enjoyed these so much.

I think it was two or three years* after this, the Math was removed from Baranagore to Alambazar. We in fact belong to the Baranagore days. Although, we had not become sannyasins our hearts and soul were with the monks. I was present on the occasion when the Math was shifted to its new abode. It was about Chaitra Sankranti.

One day Swami Trigunatita took me out for a begging; he gave me a gerrua cloth. We went about two miles, to several houses; we cried out 'Hari Krishna;' some gave us rice, some pice. That rice was cooked for Bhog (food offerings) for Sri Guru Maharaj used to say that *Biksha annam* was sacred. Then Maharaj (1) and Hari Maharaj (2) were travelling. I first saw Maharaj in 1895.

We had not met Swamiji until he had returned from America. I had seen Swamiji before; but that was without knowing who he was. I was a student in a school in which he was the head-master for a time. I was in the fourth class and I used to see Swamiji coming to the school every day. I was impressed by his sparkling eyes, and his ways of moving about. Then Sri Guru Maharaj was living; but I had not known or heard anything about him. I did not know that this, our head-master, was to be our future Swamiji. When he used to come to the school, we could see him from a window—200 ft. from the main street. He used to look about with great dignity and have a book in his hand.

In 1895 Swami Brahmanandaji returned from his tour. He was for the most part spending his days in Brindavan. Maharaj's nature was like a child. His body was as soft as butter. He used to ask us to press his body. In 1896, Holy Mother was living at a house in Bagh Bazar near the Ganges. Maharaji was also with her. Though they lived in the same house Maharaj

1. Swami Brahmanandaji.

2. Swami Turiyanandaji

hardly used to go upstairs to see Mother. Mother used to send fruits and sweets for him, saying 'Take these to Rakhal.' Of Sri Guru Maharaj, he used to talk very little. In fact, Maharaj incorporated into his life much of what Sri Guru Maharaj actually was. His feelings were so deep and intense, that he could not talk anything about him. To him it mattered not if people looked upon Sri Guru Maharaj, as a Siddha Purusha or Avatar. To him it was enough, if people came into contact with Him. I found him, performing worship one day. After Swami Ramakrishnananda left for Madras, Swami Premananda did the worship. One day he was sick and so Maharaj had to do it. In this connection, I remember also the worship which Swamiji performed. He was very particular about meditation. I know for some months we used to keep vigils. By turns, we used to sit for meditation the whole night and thus the spiritual thought was kept alive. One day when all were meditating at about 10.30 A. M. Swami Premanandaji came and requested Swamiji to do the Pooja. Swamiji stepped in the *asanam*. He mixed the chandanam with the flowers and sprinkled the flowers on the *Vedhi*, *Kauta* and *Paduka* and threw the remaining flowers on us who were meditating in the shrine room. To him, Sri Guru Maharaj was a living person. He neither rang the bell, or sprinkled water, nor did *prana prathishta*. Swamiji saw the presence of Sri Guru Maharaj in his disciples also. So he worshipped them too. What a grand idea of worship. After the Pooja was over we all came and prostrated before him.

We never heard of Swamiji until the end of 1893. The first letter he wrote was, from Japan, to Swami Ramakrishnananda. We received it in August. Until then, we did not know that he was going to America. I was then a teacher away from Calcutta, so I could not come as often to the Math as before. I saw Swamiji in February, 1897. That day was Sri Guru Maharaj's Utsab,

and I had come away to attend the Pooja. Swamiji was then staying in Seal's Garden House which was two miles away from the Alambazar Math. Without informing any one, I had come to see him. As I went to him Swamiji had just got up and was washing his face. Swami Shivanandaji introduced me to him. Swamiji said "I will make you a sannyasi, my son ; well, can you bring me a glass of water"—"Yes," I replied—"I am going to the Math" he continued, "to initiate Harrison; (Swamiji initiated him, and gave him mantram) I don't know whether Sashi, (Swami Ramakrishnananda) would like it. What do you think of it. You can come with us." "I replied" If there is no room in the carriage I can walk." But Swamiji said "No, you can sit on the top of the carriage. There were G. G., Kidi, and Chakravarty. We had hired three carriages. We came to the Math ; Swamiji initiated Harrison. After Bhog was offered we partook of the prasad. After we accompanied Swamiji to Dakshineswar. There had assembled the record making crowd. That day's public Utsab was the last of the kind held in Dakshineswar. People thronged round Swamiji. He made two or three attempts to speak, but the Crowd made it impossible for him to be heard. He came back to the Math. That day I enjoyed the privilege of fanning him. I could not stay there, as I had to attend to my school work.

(To be continued).

FOUR PATHS OF YOGA

Hitherto unpublished article by Swami Vivekananda

[The following article was the second of the three written by Swami Vivekananda with his own hand during his first visit in America to answer questions put by a Western disciple. This disciple kept them for his private use until recently when he passed them over for publication in the '*Message of the East*.']

Our main problem is to be free. It is evident then that until we realize ourselves as the Absolute, we cannot attain to deliverance. Yet there are various ways of attaining to this realization. These methods have the generic name of Yoga (to join), to join ourselves to our reality. These Yogas, though divided into various methods, can principally be classed as four ; and as each is only a method leading indirectly to the realization of the Absolute, they are suited to different temperaments. Now it must be remembered that it is not that the assumed man becomes the real man or Absolute. There is no becoming with the Absolute. It is ever free, ever perfect , but the ignorance that has covered its nature for a time is to be removed. Therefore the whole scope of all systems of Yoga (and each religion represents one) is to clear up this ignorance and allow the *Atman* to restore its own nature. The chief helps in this liberation are *Abhyasa* and *Vairagyam*. *Vairagyam* is non-attachment to life, because it is the will to enjoy that brings all this bondage in its train ; and *Abhyasa* is constant practice of any one of the Yogas.

1. *Karma-Yoga*. This Karma is purifying the mind by means of work. Now if any work is done, good or bad, it must produce as a result a good or bad effect; no power can stay it, once the cause is present. Therefore good action producing good Karma, and bad action, bad Karma, the soul will go on in eternal bondage without ever hoping for deliverance. Now Karma belongs only to the body or the mind, never to the *Atman* ; only it can cast a veil before the *Atman*. The veil cast by bad Karma is ignorance. Good Karma has the power to strengthen the moral powers and thus creates non-attachment; it destroys the tendency towards bad Karma and thereby purifies the mind. But if the work is done with an intention of enjoyment, it can only produce that very enjoyment and does not

purify the mind or *chitta*. Therefore all work should be done without any desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. All fear and all desire to enjoy here or hereafter must be banished forever by the Karma-Yogi. Moreover this Karma without desire of return will destroy the selfishness which is the root of all bondage. The watchword of the Karma-Yogi is "not I, but Thou," and no amount of self-sacrifice is too much for him. But he does this without any desire to go to heaven, or to gain name or fame or any other benefit in this world. Although the existence and rationale of this unselfish work is only in *Jnana-Yoga*, the natural divinity of man makes him love all sacrifice, surely for the good of others, without any ulterior motive, whatever his creed or opinion. Again with many the bondage of wealth is very great; and Karma-Yoga is absolutely necessary for them as breaking the crystallization that has gathered round this love of money.

Next is *Bhakti-Yoga*. Bhakti or worship or love in some form or other is the easiest, pleasantest and most natural way of man. The natural state of this universe is attraction and that is surely followed by an ultimate disunion. Even so, love is the natural impulse of union in the human heart; and though itself a great cause of misery, properly directed towards the proper object, it brings deliverance. The object of Bhakti is God. Love cannot be without a subject and an object. The object of love again must be a being at first, who can reciprocate our love. Therefore the God of love must be in some sense a human God. He must be a God of love. Aside from the question whether such a God exists or not, it is the truth that to those who have love in their heart this Absolute appears as a God of love, as personal.

The lower forms of worship, which embody the idea of God as a judge or punisher or some one to be obeyed through fear, do not deserve to be called love, although they are forms of worship gradually expanding into higher forms. We pass on to the consideration of love itself. We will illustrate love by a triangle, of which the first angle at the base is fearlessness. So long as there is fear, it is not love. Love banishes all fear. A mother with her baby will face a tiger to save her child. The second angle is love that never asks, never begs. The third or the apex is love that loves for the sake of love itself. Even the idea of object vanishes. Love is the only form in which

love is loved. This is the highest abstraction and the same as the Absolute.

Next is *Raja-Yoga*. This Yoga fits in with every one of these Yogas. It fits inquirers of all classes, with or without any belief, and it is the real instrument of religious inquiry. As each science has its particular method of investigation, so is this Raja-Yoga the method of religion. This science also is variously applied according to various constitutions. The chief parts are the *Pranayamas*, concentration and meditation. For those who believe in God, a symbolical name, received from a Guru, will be very helpful, such as *Om* or other sacred words. *Om* is the greatest, meaning the Absolute. Meditating on the meaning of these holy names and repeating them is the chief practice.

Next is *Jnana-Yoga*. This is divided into three parts. First : hearing—that the *Atman* is the only reality, everything else is *Maya* (relativity). Second : reasoning upon this philosophy from all points of view. Third : giving up all further argumentation and realising the truth. This realization consists in first being certain that Brahman is real and everything else unreal; second, giving up all desire of enjoyment; third, controlling the mind; fourth, intense desire to be free. Meditating on this reality always and reminding the soul of its real nature are the only ways in this Yoga. It is the highest, but the most difficult. Many persons get an intellectual grasp of it, but very few attain realization.—*Message of the East*.

THE WAY AND THE GOAL IN YOGA.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

TRUE religion is the realisation of Truth. The truth of man and of the universe being God, religion is the realization of God. But God cannot be sensed by the senses; nor is He a mere hypothesis. Being Truth of a higher order than the sensuous order, He can be discerned and realised and enjoyed only in a spiritual way. The Upanishads ask: "By knowing which Supreme Reality can the entire cosmos become known?" They answer: "By knowing God." The means of knowing and loving and realising God is called *Yoga* in Hindu Philosophy.

Nowhere has the science of *Yoga* been treated in such a systematic and practical way as in India. There may have been, nay, there have been, *Yogis* in all times and climes. But to love is one thing and to love knowing the science of love is quite another thing. Knowledge gives love a new power, just as love gives wings to knowledge and enables it to ring and soar. A *Yogi* is not a juggler or a charlatan or a quack or a magician or a self-hypnotiser. He is a man who knows the way and the goal and who has gone through the way and reached the goal. *Yoga* is union. It is the union of the individual soul and the Universal Soul in Love which is attained through austerity, meditation, dispassion, purity and wisdom.

Karma Yoga is the earliest step in the upward path of God-realisation. Even prior to that every man must know right and wrong and choose the right and refrain from wrong. The differentiating characteristic of humanity is there. Without such ethical life man is but a brute. But *karma yoga* is more than mere Karma. It requires us to do work as a love-offering to God, in a spirit of glad obedience to His commandments, without a desire of the

fruits of such actions, in a spirit of absolute dispassion and detachment, and with a sense of the real nature of the soul as witness (*Sakshi*) who is not a real doer, the real doer being the mind acting through the senses. The earlier chapters in the blessed Bhagavad Gita are devoted to the exposition of such Karma Yoga as being the seed-bud of the domain of the soul.

Hatha Yoga teaches us those physical practices by which the body can be made to conquer hunger and thirst and sleep and heat and cold and disease so that it can become perfectly responsive to the call of the soul to it to aid the mind in the path of meditation and introspective bliss. By practising it, various powers called *Siddhis* are acquired. But they should be welcomed as signposts on the way divine and not for their own sake. If they engross our attention, then we are sure to miss the highest purposes of life. If such powers come into the hands of men of evil nature and ambitions, they use it for the cosmic ill, and divine agencies, and sometimes God Himself, have to incarnate to set the cosmic balance right. A developed Yogi can attain wonderful clairvoyance and clairsaudience and possess wonderful powers of hypnotism, mesmerism and can cure diseases and read other's thoughts. The fact is that the finer forces of nature are in the mind and it is always a universal law that the finer forces can control and use the grosser forces. The Hatha Yogi attains freedom from disease and longevity of life and can train others to attain the same. He is, of course, a vegetarian and a tee-totaller and he is further very abstemious in food and drink. He is a marvel of self-restraint and discipline of the body and of the senses and he seeks these means to attain perfection of mental meditation on God.

Raja Yoga is the transference of the discipline of Hatha Yoga to a higher and subtler plane i. e., the plane of the mind. The wrestlings with the super-subtle and

super-restless mind are much more difficult than the wrestlings with the heavy and cumbrous and inactive body. Yoga is defined by Bhagawan Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras as *Chitta vrithi nirodhah* (the restraint of the mental states). The focussing of the scattered radiance and energy of the mind results in both illumination and power. Of the eight *angas* (limbs) of such *Yoga*, *Yama* and *Niyama* practically refer to the continuous practice of *Karma Yoga* ; and *asana* and *pranayama* refer to the continuous practice of the necessary and beneficial elements of *Hatha Yoga*. *Pratyahara*, *Dhyana*, *Dharana*, and *Samadhi* are the really distinctive characteristics of *Raja Yoga*. *The Mandala Brahmana Upanishad* and other valuable Upanishads indicate to us what are the experiences which are the sign-posts showing that we are proceeding aright on the royal road of *Raja Yoga*. India alone discovered and proclaimed the vital inter-relations of *Prana* and *Manas* (vital power and mental power). Modern science in its blind homage to the mechanical theory of life is blundering along in its attempt to derive vitality and mind from mechanical or physico-chemical forces. It may do this futile work for an age and yet be no further in the road of truth than it is to-day. There is a vital force (*Prana sakthi*) which is of a higher order than mere mechanical forces. *Prana* is not mere breath; it is a force—a finer force than mere outer mechanical forces. In fact from the matrix of *Prakriti*, *Prana sakti* is a mere fundamental derivative than mere mechanical forces. Life is not a resultant of non-life. Among the *Prakritic* derivatives the mental power is an even more fundamental derivative than vital power. The mechanism of the body is energised by *Prana sakthi* and guided by the mental power. If these are efficient and harmonious, the body is in health and power ; otherwise the body becomes diseased and unserviceable. By *Raja Yoga* the vital and the mental powers are intensified ; and hence a *Raja Yogi* can cure the physical disease and increase the

vital and mental powers of the object of his loving care. It has been discovered in India that control of the vital energy leads to the control and intensification of mental power. Thus Raja Yoga adds intensity and power to the mind whose purity has been achieved by *Karma Yoga*.

It is only such minds, so purified and so concentrated in meditation, that can tread in the paths of *Bhakthi Yoga* and *Jnana Yoga*. The love for God that we, untrained yet in Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga, feel in a dim and disturbed manner is to the intense and passionate devotion of the Bhakthi Yogi as a fire-fly is to the sun. I always feel a ripple of pitiful merriment in my heart when I hear an ordinary worldly man who has however a longing for uttering the names of the God and doing worship to God's image is described as a Bhakthi Yogi or a Bhaktha. He is doing only a good action—a fraction of Karma Yoga—which will later on fit him through the discipline of *Karma Yoga* and *Raja Yoga* to become a real Bhakthi Yogin. Even in the path of Raja Yoga, *Ishwara Pranidhana* (adoration of God) is mentioned as a means. A *Bhakthi Yogi* will be of the type of Narada or Suka or the Gopis. His already attained purity and concentration of mind are turned steadfastly in the direction of Eternal Beauty and Love and Wisdom and Grace. His love for God is a steady and unbroken passion of adoration whereon gusts of worldliness do not dash at all, or if they dash at all, dash in vain. He sees His Beloved Lord everywhere. His glad and adoring self-surrender of himself to the Supreme dowers him with ineffable Bliss. As Narada says in the first adhyaya of the first Skandha of the ever-holy *Srimad Bhagwatha* : “With hair on end through excess of adoring love, filled through and through with a sense of serene and contented satisfaction, and immersed in the ambrosial sea of devotion's bliss I do not see in sharp distinction Thee and Me, as I am full of spiritual communion and full spiritual union with Thee.” Whenever

a Bhakti Yogi comes down from the plane of union with the Beloved Lord in ecstasy he will be engaged in Raja Yoga or Karma Yoga. The nine forms of Bhakthi (smaranam, etc) are but preludes to the supreme Bhakthi. The deepest ecstasy of devotion leads to the realisation of God in Love.

Between the realisation of God in love in Bhakthi Yoga and the realisation of God in Jnana in Jnana Yoga, there is but little practical difference. Both include the vanishing of the relative reality of the world in the realisation of a larger, more fundamental and more comprehensive reality. What Bhakthi Yoga is in relation to Personal God of Love, Jnana Yoga is in relation to the Ineffable and Supreme and Absolute Being devoid of name and form. The Supreme Personal Deity is but the Absolute viewed by the liberated soul in relation to the lower and transcendable reality of the cosmos. The realisation of *Brahman* in Jnana is not a negative state but is the summit, the very *Kailasa* of *Sat Chit, Ananda*. It is not a loss of personality but the realisation of the truest and highest and absolute personality, if one may use such an expression from a philosophical point of view. The *So'ham Bhava* of Jnana is a self-transcendence of the human personality into a realisation of its real nature as Absolute Satchidananda. God-love will lead in fullness of time to such a supreme realisation.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE*

BY

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA.

WHAT human heart is there that is not thrilled with a peculiar sensation whenever the very word "Love" is uttered. It is the one thing that sweetens the bitter experiences of our life, brightens dejected hearts, animates them with new vigor, strength and cheerfulness. It makes one forget the drudgery of this world and infuses energy to perform the duties of life and enbles one to meet its toils and troubles with tranquility and happiness.

Were it not for this Love our earthly existence would be dull and the human heart would be dry ; our life would not be worth living without this Love.

This love we find manifested everywhere in nature. What is it that unites atoms with atoms, molecules with molecules and causes the planets to fly towards each other ; what is it that attracts man to man, man to woman, or woman to man and animals to animals, drawing the whole universe, as it were, towards that one centre.

It is what is called LOVE. This manifests in the lowest animals as well as in the highest beings. It is the one motive power in this universe; omnipotent, all-pervading is this Love. Under the impetus of this Love, Christ gives His life for humanity, Buddha, offers his to save an animal, a mother gives her life for a child, a husband his for the wife; under that impetus men are ready to lay down their lives for the cause of their country and, strange to say, under the impetus of that same Love, the thief steals, the murderer murders, the spirit is the same, the manifestations are different. The thief has love for the good, there is the same love, only it is misdirected.

Whatever is good, great and sublime in society is the working out of that impulse which is known as love and whatever is bad in society is also the working out of the same impulse ; one may write a check for the poor of his community and another may forge the name of his friend with the help of the

*Summary of a lecture delivered by the Swami, at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, U. S. A.

same light, the light is not to be blamed for this ; it is for them to enjoy or suffer the consequences according to the use they make of it. Fire cooks the meal and also burns the hand of the child—it is not the fault of the fire.

Uncontaminated, appearing everywhere is this Love, without which this universe would fall to pieces, and this Love is God.

In every human heart is constantly flowing a stream of love, which, like the flowing river, ever seeks an outlet through which it can run into that Infinite ocean of Divine Love. It may not find an outlet for many years, or it may remain bottled up for ages within the limited circle of the animal self, but it never loses its inherent power to run towards that Infinite ocean of Divine Love. It must find an outlet sooner or later, in this life even, or in some other life in the future, for every drop of this stream of Love, that is constantly flowing in every human heart, contains the essence of Divine Love. As a drop of water in a river contains the same chemical particles of the water of the ocean, similarly, the nature of this Love is the same as the Divine Love. It varies according to the direction towards which it flows and the nature by which it is governed; when it flows towards one's own self it is animal ; when towards others for mutual benefit, it is human; and when the same love flows towards the Divine Ideal, it is Divine.

Anything or any act that makes us forget our little individuality, our little personality, our little " me " and " mine ", anything that expands our heart toward union with the Universal is Divine and Spiritual, that we must practice, that we must cultivate ; and anything that emphasizes this little individuality that centres around one's self, all that " I ", " me and mine," my this, my that, is far down on the human plane, is not divine, is not spiritual. All love on the human plane that is centered around the little personality, that enriches only our limited self, our little *me* and *mine*, can be transformed to divine love by not thinking of one's own self, by not seeking one's own pleasures and profits, but by learning to see the *Atman*, the divine spirit in the beloved. It is true that human nature seeks suitable companionship, a suitable object for love, but all mortal objectives are momentary, the craving of the soul cannot be fulfilled until and unless we find the eternal object of our love, and that stream of love, that mighty river, will find its source and destiny when it is united with that ocean of divine

love. All kinds of love that we see manifested in this world, and with which we are playing merely have God as their one goal. Wherever there is any little happiness, any little bliss, even in the most sensual pleasure, there is a portion of the divine bliss, only we are not conscious of it.

One name for God, for Lord, in sanskrit, is *Hari*; this means, one who is attracting all towards Him; His is the only attraction that is worthy of human heart; He is attracting all the time; Hari, the Lord, is drawing us all the time, but we are not conscious of it. Can you imagine that dead matter can ever attract the soul? When a man is fascinated by a beautiful figure, when he is attracted by a beautiful face, do you think that the dead particles or molecules, arranged in a particular manner, attract him? No, it is the Divine Spirit, the divine influence that is beyond the material molecules, that attracts, but ignorant man does not know it and he is bound to suffer as a consequence; ignorance is the cause of this suffering.

When the great sage Yagnavalkya was about to retire from the world, his wife Maitreyi, approached him with questions and was taught, —None, my beloved, loves the husband for the sake of the husband, but it is for the sake of the divine self that is in the husband; none loves the wife for the sake of the wife; but for the Self that is in the wife is the wife beloved; none loves the child for the child's sake, but for the Divine Spirit that is within the child; know That and love That. That was the great teaching given by the sage to his beloved wife. That Hari, like the magnet is always attracting us, for He is inexpressible Love itself. But we ignorantly place our affections upon, direct our love towards, little dolls of human beings. The consuming love for the child that is in human nature, if placed on the little doll of a child, brings reaction and suffering in consequence. But through such sufferings we at last are rudely awakened to the fact that, so long as we place our love on little dolls of human beings, we are bound to suffer. We have to see the Divine in the child and direct our love towards the Divine. A father's love for the child must recognize that ideal in the face of the child; a husband's love for his wife must recognize that ideal in the face of his beloved, and wife's love for the husband, must recognise this ideal. We are loving that ideal but mistakenly and as a result we are suffering, there is no true bliss, no true happiness, in our love. But we have to knowingly love that ideal and

then will follow the conscious bliss within. The daily panorama of life will be changed ; instead of finding misery, we shall find this a world of bliss and happiness. We shall live, move and have our being in an infinite ocean of love and bliss.

This love for the highest, this love for the ideal, will take us ultimately to the supreme goal of love. The path of love, like any other, leads to the same goal, the supreme goal of life which is God-realization. This love every one has ; every one has tasted the sweetness of love, only there is the misdirection ; we have to direct it towards God and then our attachment to this world, for the things of this world, falls off naturally.

In this connection a question may arise :—We cannot see the eternal object of our love ; we can see our momentary objects of love alone ; that is why we love human beings. How to love the eternal object ? We cannot see Him, He does not appear before us, how can there be great love within for Him ? Of course love for that highest ideal does not occur all at once ; gradually it grows and those who have attained to the highest union through this path of love say that, in the first place, in order that true love, real love, may grow for the highest, we must have pleasure in God, pleasure in the thought of God. That is the first step in our progress towards the realization of that highest love —*pleasure in the thought of God*. We get pleasure in sense-objects, we run after little things that give us only a little happiness, a little transitory pleasure, and that same desire for pleasure we must learn to gratify in the thought of God. The prayer of the devotee is :—

“ Lord, as others take pleasure in the thought of sense-objects, so let me feel the same kind of pleasure in thoughts of Thee ” That is the prayer of the devotee. We must try to feel that same kind of pleasure in the thought of God and we can love Him only as a personal God. The God of the philosophers is absolute and impersonal, Satchidananda, absolute existence, absolute knowledge and absolute bliss. The God of the lover is *anirvachaneeya prema swarupa*. He is inexpressible love, that is the definition of a personal God. Are there then Gods—the God of the philosophers and the God of the lovers, the Impersonal and the Personal God ? No, they are two aspects of one and the same God, only the impersonal aspect is too much of an abstraction to be loved, which is why

the lovers choose the personal aspect. In fact, the impersonal aspect of God cannot be thought; cannot be brought within the range of thought. The moment the Infinite, the Absolute, is brought in the range of your thought, you make Him limited. He has to be realized only in the superconscious state. We can become Him, but we can never know Him ; in this superconscious state of experience we become one with Him. But We have to begin from where we stand and we cannot think of God aside from His personal aspect. As Swami Vivekananda used to say :—The personal God is the reading of the Impersonal through the human mind. Sri Ramakrishna used to say :—“ There is the infinite ocean of water, water is said to be formless, but there are different pitchers and vessels of different shapes and when we draw water, the water takes the form of the different vessels” Or, there is the infinite ocean of formless water, but due to intense cold, at some places there are floating icebergs, the water taking form through intense cold. Through intense love the formless takes a form as it were. It is not mere theory, but such is the realization of the lovers and true devotees ; and through this Personal aspect of God, by worshipping the Personal God, we reach the Impersonal.

The great disciple, Arjuna, of the Divine Master, Sri Krishna, had loved God only in the form of his Master, his own teacher, as he knew no other God. The Master took the disciple to a place where he saw innumerable forms of Krishna floating on the infinite ocean of bliss ; through Sri Krishna, through his master, by loving, by being devoted to that one form of Sri Krishna, he realized the infinite ocean of Divine bliss. So we can love Him only in His Personal aspect. The mother loves the child, takes pleasure in the thought of her child ; the husband takes delight in the thought of the wife, the wife takes pleasure in the thought of the husband. Similarly, in order to get the same kind of pleasure in the thought of God, we must establish some sort of relation with Him. “ Thou art our Mother, Thou art our Father, Thou art our friend and true companion ; Thou art our all in all.” Take up any relation and try to love Him as that. The devotees, the lovers of God, have classified this relation under five heads according to the various types and temperaments of different individuals. These are in their ascending order : *Santa*, *Dasya*, *Sakhya*, *Madhura* and *Viraha*. *Santa* is the ordinary common-

place love without that maddening impulse ; what the creatures have for their Creator. The next type is, *Dashya* as servant of God, as child of God, he is either a Father or Mother. The love has grown and the child loves the Divine Father, the Divine Mother. The next higher type is *sakhya*. God is our friend. He is our true friend, as with a friend we have no secrets and we are not afraid to be chided by him, but to be helped, so we approach God as our true friend, and true companion and tell Him all the secrets, the weaknesses of our life ; He does not chide us for our weaknesses, but with loving hand He helps us, because we are His playmates. What is this world, but a playground of His ? He is playing the eternal play and we are His playmates. Next is *Vatsalya*,—God as the child. The idea of power is not attributed to His nature, you have your Infant Christ and you can love Him as your own child. The next higher type of this relationship is the *Madhur*, the sweetest relation, the relationship of the lover and the beloved. We find instances amongst the devotees of India of those who have reached the highest state of realization by loving God as their own beloved. Oftentimes they try to express their love in human language, and foolish and ignorant people (with their physical eye) cannot see the beauty nor understand such expressions as—“ Oh one kiss of Thy lips, One who has been kissed by Thee has forgotten all sorrows, all miseries, worlds have vanished, the universe has melted away into the ocean of Infinite Love.” These are the different types. We have to establish some sort of relation towards God and we must love Him as that, then we can take pleasure in His thought.

Next comes *Viraha*, the sweetest of things ; as in earthly love, when a man intensely loves a woman, or a woman the man, and when they are separated from each other there is the intense longing, intense desire to be united, similarly there arises the intense longing to be united with him. With that intense longing for God, as in the case of the longing of the lovers, we begin to talk of the love of God ; that intense desire to see Him makes us forget any other thought. There is thought of God alone within and as in earthly love, when there is separation, the man takes delight only in thought about the woman, or the woman about the man ; they cannot bear the company of others with whom they cannot talk of their be-

loved. Similarly there comes a state in the devotee's mind when he cannot bear the company of others. He likes to talk of Him. He thinks of Him and Him alone, giving up all other thoughts. When we have that intense thought, that intense longing, then we come face to face with our Beloved and then comes peace. We realize Him, we see Him, we touch His feet—that is God-realization. This Love will take us step by step towards that Highest, and then what happens? As in earthly love, even a piece of cloth or something belonging to the dear one is precious, so everything in this universe becomes an object of love, because this whole universe is His.

Thus in the path of Love, we have to begin as dualists. Love comes in the middle, we approach towards God, God also comes nearer to us. At last we come face to face with the light of Love and realize the sublime teaching that love, the lover and the beloved are one.

NOTES OF THE MONTH.

The problem of untouchability has been handled by our thinkers from different standpoints for nearly a century. It was discussed by that pioneer of modern reform movements, the Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Although the social reformers have been trying to remove this evil unfortunately we find the lingering remnants of it even in their own liberal organisations. Many of our reformers are trying to remove the social evils bit by bit. But in order to remove all the symptoms of the disease we must find out the very root of it. Otherwise they will again appear in some other forms.

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The political leaders are also seriously considering the nature of this evil. It is well known that Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders are of opinion that until and unless the Indians solve the problem of untouchability, they cannot expect Swaraj. The struggle that is going on in Malabar for establishing equality of social rights, has brought to the prominence of all India, the seriousness

of the situation. The organisers of these modern movements do not take into account the fundamentals of this problem and hence the forces they bring to bear in the solution of this question, are not sufficient in themselves for the purpose, as they do not give the right solvent. It may be true that in the long run, they might have gained a temporary success. To make this success permanent, the whole outlook of the public on life, should undergo a real purification. From the experience of the previous reformers we can easily conclude, that Indian public at large will be loathe to change their age-long customs because of social or political principles.

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This problem was also studied in a thorough manner by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. He travelled throughout the length and breadth of the land, mixed freely with all classes of people, and found out the root of all our social evils. The low, the poor and the down trodden masses of the country touched the warmest cord of his heart. For centuries these people have been living a life of abject degradation and poverty; for centuries they have been told that they are unworthy to enjoy the ordinary human rights. Our customs in many places have become ludicrous and abominable. Possibly siller things never existed before, as we find them presently in some quarters of this land. The poor Panchamas are reduced next door neighbours to brutes and are actually treated as such. The struggle that is going on at Vykam has exposed before all the world the hideous outrage that is daily being perpetrated in the name of religion, by the classes against the masses.

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The high caste people are responsible for this degradation of the masses to the position of untouchables. For centuries the doors of all our cultural activities were barred against them. All possibilities of social interchange of ideas were denied them as even their right to approach

the higher classes was prohibited by society, and the ban of religious excommunication was placed on any sympathiser who felt for their welfare and organised any measures for their uplift. So it is no wonder that under the Christian Missionary influence, many left the Hindu fold where they were counted as dregs of society. It was not the religious tenets of Christianity that appealed to them. It was the possibility of enjoying the freedom from the tyranny of Hindu society that moved them to embrace Christianity. So long as a person was in our religious fold, socially he was an 'untouchable', the very air surrounding him was vitiated by his presence ! But the moment he embraces another religion, he becomes a safe man, he can come close to us and enjoy all the privileges of social conventions.

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If we think deeply over the problem of conversion into Christianity or Mohamedanism, we find that it was not the sword that made them converts, but the ethics of equality that drew the downtrodden from the Hindu fold. In the name of the shastras the high caste people are clinging to their old time-worn customs. But they seldom care to know and understand the real meaning of the Vedas and shastras. They simply follow some injunctions of the priests. They do not understand that the exclusive privileges they are now proud to enjoy, go directly against the lofty principles of the Vedantic code of life.

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As regards the method of reform, we differ from the reformers although we cannot but appreciate their sincerity. With his unerring spiritual vision Swamiji found out that the practical side of Vedantic morality was more necessary today than ever perhaps in the history of the national life in India. The ideals of the nation are forgotten and the caste system has degenerated into a meaningless institution. If we examine the early history of the caste system in India, we would find that the posi-

tion the higher castes enjoyed was never based on birth. It was their spiritual greatness, and their self-sacrifice in the name of God and humanity that gave them an exalted position in society. It was their intrinsic worth that made them the custodians of the national culture. They were seers and consequently were the teachers of society. The intensity of their life was lost by and by when, oblivious of their ideals of life, their attention was more and more diverted on temporal affairs. They were unable to digest all the honour which society heaped upon them. In them the people expected the full blossom of the spiritual virtues. But when in every day life self-interest and scramble for power became the distinguishing features of their life, the homage they received from society received a natural check. The result was that exclusiveness of a most pernicious nature made them live within narrow selfish walls of their own making and thereby prevented all social intercourse with the other orders of society. The learning which they possessed was not imparted to others except to their own community. For want of expansion, their life itself became stunted. Thus the higher castes were plainly responsible for that deterioration which we painfully notice everywhere. The remedy for the evil the great Swamiji saw only in the imparting of education, he did not mean the narrow soulless system that is in vogue in the land at present, but that process whereby man is given the opportunity to discover himself. Irrespective of caste or creed, everyone should be given an equal privilege to learn and with education, the people will get that breadth of outlook to grasp the positive and constructive elements of progress rather than clog its wheels with ignorance and superstition. It is this equality of opportunity to learn that Swamiji was very anxious to promote by scattering throughout the land innumerable institutions to train up proper citizens of the land with their civic and national virtues well developed. To initiate this noble work the great Swamiji

wanted a body of young men sworn to the cause of their country and religion, who would live in their everyday life the great truths they wanted others to practice. Now-a-days the advice that is given gratis from the platform and the press has become so cheap, that people set only a very low value to these utterances and they have become boring platitudes to us. So the hope of the country is only in those who are prepared to act boldly in the living present, than in those who sound the alarm and remain silent.

Another mistake is being committed by our people. Both the higher and depressed classes have lost sight of the old Hindu ideal of Dharma. Wherever we turn, we only hear the voice of right expressing its authority in the regulation of our life. It is our contact with the West that has made us lose sight of the old Hindu ideal of dharma. We are now trying consciously or unconsciously to adopt the western idea of 'right,' and consequently it is no wonder that we now see some of the worst aspects of the western social life, transported into the quiet soil of India. Those who go and preach about the theory of 'right' to the poor and ignorant masses, inflame only the diabolical instincts of hatred and exclusiveness. Some of these reformers in their mad fury are out to destroy with fire and sword the old order of things. They want nothing but a revolution in the state of things. The great Swamiji believed that progress can come only from within. Instead of inflaming the passions of peoples, what is wanted is the education of the higher instincts of men. Culture is the best leveller of all inequalities. The people are to be given sound ideas and their eyes must be opened not by arousing communal ill-feelings, but by the lofty ideals of life they will be trained to grasp.

All the great teachings of the Hindus are to be found only in the Sanskrit language. If we must familiarise ourselves with these, we must necessarily have a knowledge of the Vedas and shastras. So the study of the Sanskrit language should be encouraged. Every one of us should have sufficient knowledge of our scriptures to understand first hand the greatness and beauty of our religion. Our duty is to make this study the common property of all without any distinction of caste or creed. This study should spread from the forests to the busy streets of the towns amidst Brahmans, Sudras, Panchamas and all alike. Our work should be to bring the chemicals together. The crystallisation will take place of its own accord. Before the unifying ideas and principles of the Vedanta, all the internecine quarrels and other difficulties will vanish like a passing cloud. We say that the method of constructive work will not only remove the quarrel between the Hindus themselves, but will relieve also the tension between the Hindus and Muslims. The only solution for all the social evils that confront us lies in a vigorous application of the sublime truths of Vedanta in our everyday life. In the words of Swamiji we must all become *practical Vedantins*.

BOOK REVIEWS.

CREATIVE POWER OF SILENCE, BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA.
Cloth bound, pages 80, price Rs. 2-0-0.

(Published by the Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass., U. S. A.)

The torch which the late Swami Vivekananda so assiduously lit in the U. S. A. is now burning steadily with ever-increasing radiance carrying illumination and enlightenment to a region where they are most needed. The Vedanta Centre at Boston has been familiarising the American public with the ancient truths of India through that band of devoted selfless Sanyasins of the Sri Ramakrishna order of which Swami Paramananda is one of the shining lights. Students of the vedanta are already familiar with the Swami's earlier writings, "Plato and Vedic Idealism," "Reincarnation and Immortality," "Spiritual healing" and others and have learnt to associate with his writings profundity of thought and spiritual balance. In the volume of illuminating essays before us, the Swami has given us heart to heart talks on spiritual attainment and reveals himself as a true mystic. The rush, the turmoil and the hurry of modern life leave us little time to realize that life has a secret which does not merely lie on the surface. As a recent writer has aptly put it, man is an Immortal Being clad in a garb of flesh, which is vivified and moved by desires and passions and which he links to himself by a thread of his immortal nature. This thread is the mind and this mind, unsubdued and inconstant wanders out among the things of the earth, is moved by passions and desires, hopes and fears, and deafened by the tumults of its surroundings. Swami Paramananda has shown how peace of mind can be attained, which is by a systematic disciplined practice of silence, which again creates an atmosphere and enables the seeker to find access to the inner sanctuary hidden from the restless and turbulent material world. He has taken care to guard against the popular delusion of confounding the idea of silence with inaction for the aim of silence is not to free our mind from thought and assume a state of emptiness and passivity. On the contrary silence born of a peaceful, restful mind becomes a definite factor for efficient and concentrated thought. One may shut himself in the forests' untrammelled depths, and yet not obtain the state of quiescence if his *mind* is noisy and has not learnt to identify itself with the *true* instead

of with the apparent *Self*. This state of mind has to be sedulously cultivated by devoting a certain time daily to silent relaxation. Just as the physical body recoups its vitality by *rest*, the mind recoups its vitality by *silence*. Or, as the Swami beautifully puts it, what sleep does for the body and the nervous system, that silence does for our mind and spirit. The practice of physical rest restores our body and sense organs, while the practice of mental rest—silence—restores our mind. We are all familiar with the old adage "A sound mind in a sound body." If a healthy body produces a healthy mind, there is something which a healthy mind produces the value of which is equally great. I mean a healthy heart, which is the best shrine man can create for the *Supreme*. One who is yearning for spiritual perfection should needs be a votary in this shrine by a practice of habitual, faithful devotion. Then only shall he realize that the purpose of life is to fulfil the will of God. The Swami's essays deserve to be carefully read and thought over by all students of the Vedanta.

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A. S.

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THE VEDANTA—ITS ETHICAL ASPECT by *Professor K. Sundararama Aiyar, M. A.* (Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam).

We have had in recent years much useful and illuminating literature on the aspects of the Vedanta, but the foremost place should, we think, be given to Prof. Sundararama Aiyar's recent book entitled 'The Vedanta—Its Ethical Aspects,' which we have great pleasure in welcoming. The field of Vedantic thought is the richer by the contribution to it from the orthodox and traditional point of view of the essays of the Professor's who is peculiarly well-fitted for the task by his training in Western methods of study and criticism on a foundation of the traditional culture of the East.

Students of Hindu Religion and Vedantic Philosophy are familiar with the teachings of the learned Professor and they must feel grateful that he found the time to select and put together from his numerous writings spread over a large number of years a volume of illuminating essays on Hindu Philosophy considered from the Shastraic standpoint.

As Swami Vivekananda has said somewhere, man is travelling from truth to truth, from lower to higher truth, so that

all religions from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism must be regarded as so many attempts of the human soul to realise the Infinite. In this view, the Vedic Religion or the religion of the Vedanta—the Vedanta is only the concluding portion of the Veda—is and should be of universal application. In an introductory chapter the author has brought out clearly the significance of this aspect of the Vedanta. The one thing which distinguishes the Vedic religion from all religions is that it is essentially practical in its aims and methods.

Was it Maitreyi to whom the immortal words 'What shall I do with the things which do not give me the life which is beyond death' are ascribed. The author has with considerable skill and ability essayed to show that the true goal of man is and has proved the utter hollowness of the so-called modern civilization. He has impressed in no unmistakable language the ideal of India which is an ideal of fulfilment, which is different from the accumulation of material wealth, which has dominated the modern world. Modern civilization and progress are regarded as almost synonymous with a life of ceaseless and strenuous activity, its distinguishing feature being the constant multiplication of wants and the equally constant and superhuman efforts to satisfy those wants. As the result of this debased ideal, the world is witnessing the perpetual conflict between capital and labour, gigantic fortunes alongside of galling poverty and everywhere co-operation yielding place to competition and these have brought untold misery on mankind. Hence the infinite value of the Vedantic ideal with its spiritual character as the basis of a true and lasting civilization. Prof. Sundararama Aiyar deserves the thanks of the reading public for his vivid presentation of the Vedantic ideal in relation to practical life. In a few supplemental chapters the author has examined in detail the doctrine of Karma, its causes, its motives, Karma as service and the fruit of Karma. These and the illuminating chapter on Karma and fatalism regarding which there has been much confusion of thought deserve to be carefully read. These essays were originally published in the pages of the *Vedanta Kesari* and their present shape in a beautifully got up book has facilitated a thorough reading and understanding of the subjects dealt with. We commend the entire volume for diligent study.

A. S.

THE VIGIL—POEMS BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA, price Rs. 2-8-0. (*Published by the Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass. U. S. A.*).

This is a companion volume to the earlier volume of poems "Soul's Secret Door" by Swami Paramananda. In both, *bhakti*, the intense love of the Soul to the Divine, taking voice as the cry of the child for the mother, of the lover for the beloved, is the key-note.

"To Thee Whose holy hand
Kindled my heart with this fire of love,
I consecrate my soul's outpouring."

That was the burden of the song in 'Soul's Secret Door.'

"Thou didst plant an immortal seed in this field of mine.
Do 'Thou accept the blossoming."

As so well put in the Preface to the volume of poems before us, 'The Vigil' springs from the Swami's earlier volume of poems like a flower from its branch, with a tremendous yearning for God.

"Season of blossoming is the time of love,
Heart of the bud bursts with the fulness of its love.
The flower speaketh its inmost heart by giving up its fragrance,
Let the heart like the flower blossom with love."

Doubt has no place in the heart of one who really yearns for God :

"Get thee gone, thou foul disease of mind !
Doubt is thy name, thou dweller in the darkness."
"Didst thou not come naked from the mother's womb ?
Didst thou not have thy soul in safety even before thy body
is born ?
One who watched over thee then, watches over thee now ;
One who loved thee then, loves thee now."

Doubt must go and the devotee must seek the Lord with abounding love to merit His grace :

"Thy love is my armour, my impenetrable shield, my unfailing
safeguard,
I bathe in Thee and am refreshed,
I feed on Thy love and my soul-hunger is appeased.
What need have I of anyone else
When Thou dost fill me and had honoured me
With Thy inexhaustible and all-filling love ?
"Beloved guide, my soul's safe-keeper,
Thy firm but gentle hand of wisdom hath saved me from
falling over the precipice of life, many many times,
Thy tender care and unchanging patience have
ever shielded me."

Hope should take the place of 'doubt in the mind of the seeker after God, if he deserves to have the Divine grace :

"Awaiting for Thee my Love, my Life, Soul of my Love !
Many hours of day and night have passed me by,
Yet my faith kindles my hope and in my light of hope
I see Thy approach even in dense dark of night."

We have another poem giving this experience of the seeker after God :

"Far have I travelled,
Long have I struggled,
Following the impulse of my restless will,
Seeking ! Seeking ! Seeking !
In quest of happiness I sought through,
Life's mansion, going from chamber to chamber
But happiness I found not there.
I found happiness nowhere till my
Self-will was lost in His will."

The devotee feels satisfied in his mind that true *bhakti* and hope will have their due reward and this phase of the Swami's experience in his quest is set down in a poem which is all gold :

"Sweet comforter, my soul's abiding shelter,
Thou hast saved me by Thy look of boundless compassion,
Thy smile hath gladdened my whole being,
Touch of Thy hand hath filled me with strength ;
Glance of Thine eyes have given me new sight of hope ;
Fragrance of Thy being hath awakened in me pure love :
Verily Thou art the breath of my life,
Strength of my limbs,
Solace of my soul."

Again we have :

"Thou eternal tree of shelter !
As I sit under thy protecting boughs
My storm-pressed heart sighs with relief
Thou has given me my long-lost peace."

Even in his quest, the devotee who leaving 'doubt behind presses on with hope and faith, gets clear glimpses of the promised land :

"When Thou art near me, time puts on wings and flies speedily ;
Space melts into nothingness and my life's cares are forgot,
Yea, Thou hast thrown a magic
Around me—
I forget myself so wholly when I am near Thee
Oh ! how my soul delights in this self-delusion !"
"Companion of my life

Before I found Thee, I was an aimless wanderer
 Roaming alone like a wanton child.
 Thy divine beauty hath turned my restless mind.
 Thou hath shielded me by Thy protecting love."
 "Lamp of my life,
 Joy of my soul,
 Vigour of my spirit art Thou.
 Without Thy grace my life is an empty vessel."

Realization at last. The seeker has succeeded in reaching the promised land, the heaven. There the individual Self is lost in the Universal Self. Finite and the Infinite play in unison their game of harmony. There, all is melody and music and perpetual peace :

'In solitude's inmost stillness there is a Sacred Shrine.
 Divine harmony sings there ;
 Pure Fragrance shines there ;
 Sweet fragrance permeates the air.
 But none can find access to this holy sanctuary
 Whose inner eyes are closed ;
 Nor can one enter there
 Whose foot-steps are heavy and slow."

The Swami has the rare gift of being able to express the subtlest spiritual truths in exquisite poetry with a charm all his own. In this respect he may justly lay claim to take an honoured place among the galaxy of the poet-saints of India, Tukaram, Kabir, Tulsidas and great mystics like Thomas-a-Kempis and Dean Farer and Nammalwar.

The entire volume of poems to which we extend our heartiest welcome is verily a garland of sweet-scented flowers of delicate hues exquisitely worked out and shining with spiritual beauty which can only be experienced.

A. S.

NEWS AND REPORTS.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MADRAS, FLOOD RELIEF WORK.

A REPORT.

SINCE the last issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*, the Flood Relief Work organised and conducted by the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, has been steadily expanding and affording relief to thousands of poor people in the flooded areas. Readers of the daily newspapers would have read from time to time, the reports issued by us regarding the work done by the Mission. The following is a summary of the various reports and will give the reader an idea of the work so far done, and the immense task that is before us. It is needless to add that the sympathy and generous help of the public should take practical shape by gifts of money, foodstuffs, cloths, building materials, etc.

Two batches of workers were sent out on 22nd July, one to the Coimbatore District and the other to Tanjore and Trichinopoly Districts. In both the Districts the Swamis found great distress and immediately opened relief centres.

In the Coimbatore District, Bhavani and the surrounding villages twelve in number were seriously affected. The poor people were almost on the verge of starvation. Bhavani was made the centre for twelve villages and the number of recipients stands at an average of 1,500 persons per day. Another centre at the same time was opened at Dalvaipettai to help that place and four other villages, the number of people needing food-grains being more than 400. The Swamis in these two places also visited other areas and as a result, issued a report stating the number of houses damaged, the total amount of loss, etc. They found that Satyamangalam and the outlying villages were in need of help and a centre was immediately opened, 110 families receiving help in the shape of food-grains. Cloths are also being distributed to many people at these centres. The Swami in charge of the work at Bhavani, after inspecting other affected areas on the banks of the Cauvery, found out that great distress was prevailing in Samplly and Neringipet and outlying quarters. So these two places were lately made into relief centres, and workers have gone to these places. After due inspection, many needy families here are now getting relief. Near Satyamangalam, two more centres for distribution have been opened at Arasar and Sadumuyur.

The second batch reached Trichinopoly after suffering great hardships. They immediately set about investigating into the condition of the people, sometimes swimming from one village to another to do so. The Swamis found that in Tanjore and Trichy, many families had no shelter, and could not even come for help to other places. A sum of Rs. 500 was wired for and sent and a large number of families were given help in building huts, etc., to help in the shape of rice, and other food-grains is distributed from Manalmedu to 61 villages covering an area of 40 square miles. About 600 families or 300 persons receive help in the shape of rice or other food-grains to keep body and soul together.

From Bhavani, Dalvaipettai, Satyamangalam, Manalmedu and other centres appeals are pouring in daily for cloths. Consignments have been already sent

to some of these places, but unless more funds are on hand, it will be impossible to do much to help the suffering poor.

In each of the centres, great care is taken to ascertain that the help is given only to the most needy. Inquiry is made in reliable quarters, the name is entered and help given. The help of the local Revenue Officers is sought whenever necessary. Kambu which is the staple food of the poorer classes of people is distributed at the rate of 1¼ Madras measure per adult. In the case of a few families who have not been accustomed to this food rice is distributed. Cloths, as already mentioned, are badly needed and is distributed, it need hardly be mentioned, only to those who are absolutely in need of it. Registers are being maintained at each of the centres and weekly reports sent in to the Madras Headquarters.

In Bhavani and outlying places the help that is needed is in the shape of food-grains and clothing. In the Tanjore District, in addition to the above two, there is great need for the purchase of building materials. While much can, and is, done by the local authorities to help the people in purchasing the materials, there is great need for private relief.

The want of workers is greatly felt. The Swamis find that more volunteers are required to cope up with the work. An old student of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home worked at Satyamangalam, and two Swamis came from Calcutta to help in carrying on the work. It is absolutely necessary that men who could devote at least a short time, say a week or a fortnight should go and work at these centres.

The work was commenced with a loan of Rs. 200. We have received about Rs. 19,000 so far of which about Rs. 12,000 have been spent. House to house collections, appeals through the Press, appeals to liberal minded countrymen, collections in Colleges, Hostels, etc. are the means employed to collect the funds. It is hoped, however, that public-spirited ladies and gentlemen will give all that they can in order to help their suffering countrymen.

Now that the floods have subsided, there is great need for constructive work to prevent starvation, famine and consequent rise and spread of epidemics. May we not hope that many who have not contributed will do so at least now, and those who have given already, double their gifts?

All contributions however small will be received and acknowledged by any of the following :—

1. THE PRESIDENT, R. K. MISSION, P. O. BELUR, DT. HOWRAH,

or

2. THE PRESIDENT, R. K. MISSION, MYLAPORE, MADRAS,

or

3. THE SECRETARY, R. K. MISSION, MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

[A detailed account of the whole work will be published after the relief operations are closed. The accounts will be audited by a Chartered Accountant and will be placed before the public.]

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar. ”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
‘The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman.’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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SUPERCONSCIOUS STATE*

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

TO attain to the superconscious state of existence, to be blessed with the ecstatic vision, has been the great dream of the mystics, sages, philosophers and seekers after truth of all ages. All the different religions of the world proclaim with one voice that this attainment is the supreme goal of life. Sages and philosophers of different countries call this state by different names. In Sanskrit it is called *Samadhi*. The Buddhists call it *Nirvana*,—the cessation of all miseries and the attainment of blessedness. It is not a state of nothingness as some mistakenly believe, but the attainment of perfection. The Christian mystics of the medieval ages called this same state a state of ecstasy. Modern Christians call it the Divine communion.

Names and methods may vary but all point to the same goal. Seekers of all sects—Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Mohammedans strive hard to attain that state of consciousness. Jesus became the Christ after attaining to that state of consciousness. Sakyamuni became the Buddha, or the Enlightened One, after reaching that state. Sri Ramakrishna, the great sage of the 19th century, attained to this state of blessed union. This state was just as natural to Sri Ramakrishna as the state of

* A lecture delivered at the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, U. S.A.

ordinary consciousness is to us. That is the reason why he is worshipped by thousands and thousands all over the world as the Incarnation of the Most High.

Once my Master told me that true religion begins when the gate to the superconscious vision opens up. And until that state is attained there is no real difference between an atheist and a believer.

Every individual of every sect, every form of belief, must attain that state for herself or himself. That is the one goal of life, the purpose of evolution. None can expect to become a singer because he has been given a few books on music. You cannot expect a man to become a surgeon by giving him a few books on surgery to read. You cannot expect to satisfy a curiosity for seeing countries by looking at maps. Maps may arouse curiosity, but your curiosity can only be satisfied by actually seeing the countries. So real and permanent satisfaction can only come through attainment of the superconscious vision.

Well has it been said by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great poet-philosopher of America, "A man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his actions, would make our knees bend." The eating, drinking, planting, counting man is what is known as the "apparent" man, but the "real" man is behind, always Divine. Swami Vivekananda has said: "The real man is the circle whose circumference is nowhere but whose centre is everywhere." The real man is the source of all wisdom, bliss and perfection. Not knowing that the eternal river of infinite wisdom and bliss is constantly flowing in him, man runs here and there, seeking little happiness from outside, like the fool, who though living on the bank of a mighty river, digs a well to satisfy

his thirst. We do not know how wise and how good we really are ? It takes a long time to discover that. The wise man is he who knows the secret of unlocking the door which blocks the outrush of that river of eternal knowledge and bliss which is constantly flowing within. This blissful state lies beyond our present consciousness, that is why it is called the superconscious state.

Very few of us have any definite conception of what this state of superconsciousness is. We associate it with all sorts of hobgoblins and miracles, or gaining a few psychic powers. Again there are others who reject this state completely as something dull and inactive, having no practical value in life.

These misconceptions have arisen from the fact that on the one hand there are charlatans, religious and otherwise, taking advantage of the ignorance of the people—the miracle-mongers ; and on the other hand there are the materialists to whom sense-pleasure has the only practical value in life.

But the true seekers after truth know that religion has nothing to do with mystery-mongering and they also realize its practical value in life, inasmuch as it leads to the very fountain of bliss and wisdom. It is the superconscious vision alone which leads to the very highest state of blessedness.

Though all the different religions are but so many attempts to attain the state of superconsciousness, yet it is in Yoga philosophy alone that we find the only scientific and logical explanation. I shall try to give a summary of the explanation reached by the great Patanjali, the father of Indian Yoga philosophy.

In the first place, what is superconsciousness ? We know that ordinarily there are two planes in which the human mind works. First is the conscious plane, in which all work is accompanied with the feeling of egoism. When in the conscious plane ' I know a thing,' or ' I see

an object, ' I am conscious that *I know it*, I see it. Thus the consciousness is always supported and accepted by the ego. Next comes the unconscious plane, where all work is unaccompanied by the feelings of egoism. When we are asleep, we move the body, we breathe, we engage in many activities, we even talk in our sleep, but in all this we have no feeling of its being accompanied by the *ego*. This is the unconscious working of the mind. That part of the mind-workings which is unaccompanied with the feelings of egoism is unconscious work, and that part which is accompanied with the feeling of egoism is conscious work.

Now, the Yogis claim to have experienced a state beyond consciousness ; and they also claim that every individual can be trained to rise to that state of experience. Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness, and which also is unaccompanied with the feeling of egoism. The feeling of " I " is on the middle plane. When the mind is above or below that line, there is no feeling of ' egoism ' and yet the mind works. When the mind goes *beyond* this line of self-consciousness, it is called SAMADHI or superconsciousness. In the plane below the line of self-consciousness, we live steeped in ignorance, there was not evolved the " I " consciousness, but in the other plane which lies beyond, we evolve from the little ego to the Universal *Ego*.

You may ask, what proof is there that when a man is in *Samadhi* he has not gone below consciousness, has not degenerated instead of going higher ? In both cases there is not *self*-consciousness. The answer is : by the effects, by the results of the work, we know that which is below, and that which is above. When a man falls asleep, he enters a state beneath consciousness. Because when he returns from his sleep, he is the same man who went into it. The sum-total of his knowledge remains

the same, has not increased. But if one even by chance can once enter Samadhi, even though he might have gone in as a fool, he will come out a seer, a great sage. From one state a man comes out the very same man he went in, and from another state the man comes out enlightened, a sage, his whole character changed, his life illumined. These are the two effects. And this, in short, is the idea of *Samadhi*, or superconsciousness.

Our reason works within certain limitations. It cannot go beyond a limited circle. Yet the dearest treasures of the human heart lie beyond the function of reason. The answers to questions, such as the immortality of the soul, the existence of a Supreme Intelligence guiding this universe, the problems of life and death, etc., cannot be found while in the conscious state. Our limited reason cannot give the answers. Reason is agnostic. Reason says, "I don't know." Yet on the answers to these problems depend all there is of life. Without answers to these our life becomes purposeless—there can be no morality, no ethics, no social standard of life and no balance for all the multiple machinery of human intercourse.

The Yoga philosophy teaches that each one of us will find the answer when we rise to that superconscious state. Transcendental knowledge is gained when we reach that state.

Plotinus, the great Christian mystic who lived two hundred years after Christ, having realized that state said: "You ask how you can know the Infinite? I answer not by reason. It is the office of reason to distinguish and define. The Infinite cannot be ranked among its objects. You can only apprehend the Infinite by a faculty superior to reason, by entering into a state in which you are your finite self no longer, in which the Divine Essence is communicated to you. This is ecstasy. It is the liberation of your mind from its finite anxieties.

Like only apprehends the like. When you thus cease to be finite, you become one with the Infinite. In the reduction of your soul to its simplest self, its divine essence, you realize this union, nay, this identity."

One thing to remember is that while this state cannot be attained through reason, yet we have to base our life on reason, we must keep our balance through reason. If one says "I am inspired" and talks foolishness, do not take his words for truth; prove them by reason. Instinct, reason and inspiration---these are the three different states of the one and the same mind. There are not three minds. And one develops into the other. Instinct develops into reason and reason into inspiration. "I come not to destroy but to fulfil." So inspiration does not destroy reason, but fulfils it.

The soul in each individual is constantly trying to manifest its Divine nature; and its attempts are successful when the superconscious state is reached. (*Vidyate hridaya granthi Chidagante sarva samsaya*). "Then all doubts cease; all problems of life and death are solved." When man realizes that state, he is no longer the same man, he becomes a new man. His life is illumined; he is now the instrument and play-ground of the will of the Almighty Being. In every action he manifests and fulfils the Divine Will. His will is identified completely with the will of the Divine.

The superconscious plane is all-inclusive, complete. It is not the same as the conscious plane, but the conscious plane is included in the superconscious. The view-point of life is changed. The veil is removed and we can see the light. We become more tolerant and are willing to endure all for the sake of others.

If we look at the world from our present angle of vision, we can find no explanation of life, but when we see it from the superconscious plane, we find a full, comprehensive explanation of its play and purpose. When

the veil of ignorance is removed, then we realize the Truth.

Now you have some idea of what superconsciousness is. Next the question is, how to attain that state? Different religions give different methods. If you but follow sincerely the teachings of one single religion, you will attain that state; for all lead to the same goal. Vedanta accepts all religions, because in Vedanta is included all methods. And these different methods have been classified under four general divisions, *viz.*, those of love, of work, psychology and knowledge. One has to follow one's own path according to one's temperament and character.

Vedanta does not exclude any from the fold as hopeless or because they are sinners. For what is sin, but a bundle of habits. And one set of habits can be changed by another set, thus forming a new character. Character is repeated habits and repeated habits alone can reform character. Thus Vedanta includes all and gives the lift towards higher and higher unfoldments from where one stands.

I have already mentioned the fact that there are different methods to realize the same goal. Here I shall try to give the main principle underlying all the different processes.

In going to define Yoga or what is the process of unfoldment, Patanjali has said "*Chitta vritti nirodha*," "restraining the mind-stuff from taking various forms." As in a lake when the surface is rippled by the wind, the bottom cannot be seen, so when the surface of the lake of the mind is disturbed by the ripples of desires and thoughts, the soul which lies deep at the bottom can never be seen. All knowledge is within. If the mind is controlled, the mine of knowledge and bliss, the true nature of our soul shines forth. The different methods of praye

meditation and others bring the same result. They calm the mind, giving the power of concentration.

Meister Eckhart, a Christian mystic of the fourteenth century, says : " There must be perfect stillness in the soul before God can whisper His word into it, before the light of God can shine in the soul and transform the soul into God. When passions are stilled and all worldly desires silenced, then the word of God can be heard in the soul. "

One fact must be pointed out in this connection. As we gain the power of concentration, various psychic powers will arise, which tempt us by their exercise to wander from the path of final realization. As in the first place we have to give up enjoyment of the material world for the greater bliss of the superconscious state, so we have also to relinquish these higher temptations. Sri Ramakrishna used to say : " We must always keep the sword of discrimination with us. " A little healing power, reading the thoughts of others, seeing visions, telling the future—what do these amount to after all ? Can anything give everlasting life to the body ? Can there be any everlasting happiness and bliss in the material plane ? No, we have to rise above the temptations of psychic power.

Powers will come but be careful not to yield to them. However, as they come it is a sure sign that we are progressing more and more. They are the pillars of our spiritual edifice and the milestones of our progress, but we must never yield to the great temptation to use them and thus completely set back our spiritual progress.

Religion is really a simple thing, unless we make it complex through our complex desires and complex living. No, we have to be as simple and pure as a child before we can enter into the Kingdom of God— " Be ye like children that ye may enter the Kingdom of Heaven. "

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

WITH THE SWAMIS IN AMERICA

VIRAJA DEVI

EARLY in March 1900, the Swami Vivekananda gave a series of three lectures on "Indian Ideals" in Redmen's Hall, Union Square, San Francisco, and it was at the first lecture of this series that I had the blessed privilege of hearing him. Being in ill health, both mentally and physically, it was a great effort to go to the lecture, and as I sat in the hall waiting for the Swami to come, I began to wonder whether I had not made a mistake in coming to hear him ; but all doubts vanished when the Swami's majestic figure entered the hall. He talked for about two hours telling us of India's Ideals and taking us with him, as it were, to his own country so that we might understand him a little, and be able to comprehend even in the least the great truths he taught. After the lecture I was introduced to the Swami, but feeling over-awed by his wonderful presence, I did not speak, but sat down at a distance and watched him, while waiting for friends who were busy settling up the business connected with the lectures. After the second lecture, I was again waiting, sitting at a distance watching the Swami, when he looked across and beckoned to me to come to him. I went and stood before him, as he sat in a chair. He said, "Madam, if you want to see me privately, you come to the flat on Trunk Street, no charge there, none of this botheration about money."

I told him I should like very much to see him. He said "Come to-morrow morning" and I thanked him. Much of the night was spent thinking of all the questions I should ask him, as many questions had been troubling me for months and no one to whom I had gone was able to help me. On arriving at the flat next morning, I was

told that the Swami was going out, so could not see anyone. I said I knew he would see me because he had told me I might come, so I was allowed to go up the stairs and into the front sitting-room. In a little while the Swami came into the room, dressed in his long overcoat and little round hat, chanting softly. He sat on a chair on the opposite side of the room and continued chanting softly in his incomparable way. Presently he said "Well, Madame". I could not speak but began to weep and kept on weeping as though the flood-gates had been opened. The Swami continued chanting for a while, then said "Come to-morrow about the same time".

Thus ended my first interview with the Blessed Swami Vivekananda, and as I went from his presence, my problems were solved and my questions were answered, though he had not asked me anything. It is now over 24 years since that interview with Swami, yet it stands out in memory as the greatest blessing of my life. I had the wonderful privilege of seeing Swamiji every day for a month, and was in the meditation class, which he held in Trunk Street.

I used to stay after the class and help him cook lunch, etc., or rather, he allowed me to be in the kitchen with him and do odd jobs for him, while he talked Vedanta and chanted and cooked. One verse from the *Gita* he chanted a great deal is verse 61, Chapter 18 : "The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, by His illusive power, causing all beings to revolve as though mounted on a potter's wheel".

He chanted it in the Sanskrit, and every now and then would stop and talk of it. He was so wonderful, his nature so many-sided, at times so child-like, at times the Vedanta Lion, but to me always the kind and loving parent. He told me not to call him Swami, but to call him Babaji, as the children did in India. Once

when walking along the street with Swamiji after a lecture, all at once he seemed to me so big, as though he towered above the ordinary mortal. The people on the street looked like pigmies, and he had such a majestic presence, that people stepped aside to let him pass by. One evening after the lecture, Swamiji insisted upon taking a party of about 10 or 12 of us to have ice-cream. Some ordered ice-cream and some ice-cream soda. Swamiji was fond of ice-cream but did not care for ice-cream soda. The waitress who took the order made a mistake and brought ice-cream soda for the Swami; she said she would change it for him. The proprietor spoke to the waitress about it, and when Swamiji heard him, he called out "Don't you scold that poor girl. I'll take all the ice-cream soda if you are going to scold her."

After living in Fork Street for a month, Swamiji went to Alameda and stayed at the 'Home of Truth'. It was quite a large house and was surrounded by a beautiful garden, which the Swamiji used to walk about in smoking. There was quite a large porch on the house on which Swamiji sat sometimes talking to the few of us who gathered around him. The Easter-Sunday night was the full moon, the nisteria was in full bloom and draped the porch like a curtain. Swamiji sat on the porch smoking and telling funny stories, then he told of how his feet hurt him when he wore shoes in Chicago, and of his experience with a lady-doctor who had undertaken to doctor his toe. He said "Oh my toe, my toe, whenever I think of that lady-doctor my toe hurts". Then one of the party asked him to talk on "Renunciation." "Renunciation?" said Swamiji, "Babies, what do you know of renunciation?" "Are we too young even to hear of it?" was asked. Swamiji was silent for a while and then gave a most illuminating and inspiring talk. He spoke of discipleship and of entire resignation to the Guru, which was quite a new teaching

to the Western world. While in Alameda Swamiji used to cook Hindu dishes for himself on Sunday afternoons and I again had the privilege of being with him and partaking of his dishes, and although I attended all Swamiji's public lectures both in San Francisco and Alameda, it was this close contact with the Swamiji, that I most deeply cherish. Once after being quiet for some time Swamiji said "Madame, be broad-minded, always see two ways. When I am on the Heights I say 'I am He,' and when I have a stomach-ache, I say 'Mother, have mercy on me' Always see two ways." On another occasion he said "Learn to be the witness. If there are two dogs fighting on the street and I go out there, I get mixed up in the fight, but if I stay quietly in my room I witness the fight from the window. So learn to be the witness." While in Alameda Swamiji gave public lectures in Tucker Hall. He gave one wonderful lecture "The Ultimate Destiny of Man" and finished by placing his hand on his chest and saying "I am God". A most awed silence fell upon the audience and many people thought it blasphemy for Swamiji to say such a thing.

Once he did something in rather an unconventional way and I was a little shocked at him. He said "Oh Madame, you always want this little outside to be so nice. It is not the outside that matters, it is the inside".

How little we understood the Swamiji? We had no knowledge of what he really was. Sometimes he would tell me things, and I in the abundance of my ignorance, would tell him I did not think that way, and he would laugh and say "Don't you?" His love and toleration was wonderful. Swamiji was not in good health—much lecturing told upon him. He used to say he did not like platform work, "Public lecturing is killing. At eight o'clock I am to speak on 'Love'. At eight o'clock I do not feel like love"! After he finished lecturing in Alameda, the Swami went to Camp Taylor and a little

later started for the East and we in California never saw him again. Yet we who were blessed by his presence cannot feel he is entirely gone from us. He lives in our memories and in the teachings he gave us. Before he left he told me if I ever got into psychic difficulty again to call on him and he would hear me wherever he was, even though hundreds of miles away, and it may be he can hear even now.

A few months after Swamiji left, Swami Turiyananda arrived in San Francisco. He held a meditation class at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Peterson. He also lectured at the Home of Truth at 2173, California Street one Sunday evening. After the lecture he asked for questions and someone asked him "What is attachment?" to which the Swami replied "Me and mine". Swami did not stay long in San Francisco at this time. He went to the Shanti Ashrama with twelve students, where they went through the hardships of pioneers, but in return received the beautiful teachings given by the Swami.

The Swami consecrated the Ashrama and gradually temporary cabins were put up and the meditation cabin was built which still stands as a monument to the work of the Swami Turiyananda. I was not at the Ashrama at that time, but used to see the Swami and attended his Gita classes given in San Francisco. Once when in San Francisco the Swami was asked if there was anything he needed for the Ashrama to which he replied "Souls, consecrated souls". One Gita lesson Swami gave on verse 47, Chapter II, "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof." He repeated these words over and over again, and said we are always looking for fruits, always peeping to see what is coming, what we are going to get. Swami Turiyananda was succeeded by the beloved and energetic Swami Trigunatita.

During his ministration, the Temple was built and all the permanent buildings were put up at the Ashrama. The Swami himself led a life of the greatest asceticism whether in the Temple or at the Ashrama, allowing himself little sleep and working continually. When at the Ashrama he did all the cooking for 37 people, gave three classes a day on the meditation platform and two Gita classes at meal times. His energy was untiring, nothing was too small to demand his attention. He was interested in all the little details and daily occurrences in the lives of his students. He was like a fond mother always looking out for the welfare of her children, training them in various ways as their nature required, now by strict discipline, now gently taking them by the hand and leading them into paths of peace and blessedness. After a time the Swami Prakashananda came to the Temple and the two Swamis worked together, both taking part in the public lectures, etc. Swami Prakashananda not only helped with platform work, but he used to clean the auditorium and do many things considered menial work, in the spirit of true humility and service, thus giving many valuable lessons by his example.

The Swami Trigunatita conducted a Sanskrit class, the members of which were supposed to be able to stand rather severe training. Swami said that his heart did not work in that class, only his head. In this class he gave many never to be forgotten and valuable lessons, though at the time they were perhaps not fully appreciated. Swami passed away on January 10th, 1915, in San Francisco and his ashes were buried on the Hill of Realization at the Shanti Ashrama, April 13th (I think it was) 1916, the Swami Prakashananda officiating at the service held by the Swami and a few students who had accompanied him to the Ashrama. In the passing away of Swami Trigunatita those of us who had been blessed by his

teaching, by his unending patience, and his ever watchful care of us felt we had sustained an irretrievable loss, yet we feel his presence with us and the work for which he gave his life is being ably carried on by the much beloved Swami Prakashananda. Long may he be spared to remain with us, and now we have also with us Swami Prabhavananda who is giving instructive and illuminating discourses and we feel blessed by his presence amongst us.

VIRAJA DEVI.

"SOUL'S GROWTH IS MY WATCH-WORD"*

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

IT is very seldom that man gets what he exactly longs for; every man is sure to have many a disappointment in life—whether worldly or spiritual. Spiritual disappointments are heart-breaking no doubt, but they have a highly salutary effect upon many that are sincerely searching for Divine wisdom. They teach us the great lesson of self-help, they teach us, in the words of our most beloved Swamijee, "to stand on our own legs." However we may talk of 'perfection' being the essence of our soul, in actual life we find its opposite holding supreme sway; and a broad gulf separates even highly advanced men from the Ideal. What are we to do then? should we then give up our attempts as fruitless and set worldly ideas before us? By no means. We must fight to the last breath for the perfection—the spiritual Ideal. Even if the Ideal be unattainable by man, the struggle itself generates infinite strength in our souls,—it brings in us a hope and faith which nothing in this world—(however perverse it may appear in the light of the Ideal) can shake. And, oh, the joy of that faith! It is God Himself. Who would care a straw for your God if He could not bring us infinite joy? And who that has

*These are extracts from a letter written on 23—8—1906 by the Swami to a friend in Bangalore. The late Swami Vimalananda, (who entered into Mahasamadhi in 1908) was a disciple of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. His memory is held in great reverence by all who came in contact with his sweet and genial nature. The readers of *V. K.* are perhaps familiar with an address delivered by the Swami on his master and published in *V. K.* last year, under the title "The Master as I saw Him." The Swami was for some time the editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*. He had also worked in Bangalore when the Mission was first established there. We take the liberty to publish this letter under the above title hoping that it will bring to the reader the same consolation and happiness which it brought to him who enjoyed it first. In this letter one can have an idea of the real make-up of the Swami's personality, for his life was a living commentary of that ideal of life which he has tried to picture here,—Ed.

this joy of faith in himself would trouble himself about the possibility or otherwise of man's attaining Him? If is struggle—sincere struggle to become pure, humble and loving to all—that brings everything. The spring lies hidden within our own souls ; we have to open it by hard knocks—we have to do it ourselves ; no one else can do it for us—not even an *Avatar*. You have known what the Ideal is, you have known how to struggle for its realisation. Go on *doing*. It is sure to bear fruit sooner or later. Swamijee has opened your eyes. He has opened up the path before you. Go on steadily pursuing it with all your might. He is sure to lead you safe to the goal—Don't trouble yourself whether others are following the same path or not. Never mind whether others regard Him and His words in the same light or not. Your soul has told that you are His and He is yours.. Bring yourself in closer communion with Him—and every blessed thing will be yours. Light, Life, Love, Peace, Strength will permeate your soul through and through and flow out through you upon those that will come in touch with you. Has not Swamijee again and again told us that purity, love and unselfishness are the only conditions of attaining spiritual light? Neither caste nor learning nor oratory nor austerities count for anything in the spiritual kingdom. Sincerity, humility, sympathy, snow-white purity—these bring freedom to man. This is the law. And are you not sincerely struggling to attain them? Why should you get disheartened then? Why should you despair? Go on with infinite courage and hope. The blessings of the Master are upon you and you are sure to see His Hand in everything. Don't despair, dear friend, don't despair. Be of good cheer, be up and doing with your heart and soul laid firmly upon Him—Nothing can prevent you from coming out perfectly victorious from the fight.

This world stands upon the principle of variety. No two individuals will be perfectly alike in physical as well

as mental constitution. Each one of us should have his own Ideal and take from others what falls in with that Ideal and help us in making closer approach to it. We should never indulge in the vain hope of bringing all to our own ways of thought. We should always be ready to help others in the realisation of their own ideals and at the same time stick with all our heart and soul to our own. We should, further, keep our hearts always open to receive help from whatever quarter it comes. We should always receive with joy and gratitude whoever brings us help in the realisation of *our own ideals*—be he a *pariah* or a *Brahmin*, a *Grihastha*, or a *Sannyasi*, a *Christian* or a *Theosophist*.

Soul's growth is my watchword, wider and deeper love and sympathy—greater sweetness and softness and humility of temper, profounder calmness of the soul and greater indifference to material comforts are its sure indications. Wherever I shall find these—one, two or more in whatever degree of perfection—I shall venerate and love and learn from. This is what I understand by religion—as lived by our Divine Master. This is my ideal and I can only present it before my friends and acquaintances—leaving them free to choose it for themselves or not.

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

SOME REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY RAMAKRISHNA MATHS AND MONKS

(Continued from page 132.)

SWAMI BODHANANDA

DURING the coming summer vacation time I came back to stay at the Math. It was during these days, the rules and regulations of the Math were framed by Swamiji. One evening he was teaching us Sankaracharya's philosophy. So nobody could attend the shrine during the evening service. Swami Premanandaji resented this omission and reproached Swamiji for holding up the members. But Swamiji took him to task severely. "You see, Baburam, this study is as great as your service in the shrine." Swami Premanandaji took to heart Swamiji's scolding. He was very sensitive and so after the Aratrikam, (evening service) all on a sudden he disappeared. Everybody felt very anxious for him. So all went out in search of him. After a long search we discovered him sitting in a corner on the terrace. Then we made much fun of him. Swamiji then asked him, "Baburam, you are my brother. Are you angry with me?" Hearing these words of Swamiji, he fell prostrate at his feet and asked his pardon for his conduct. Whenever Swamiji would scold anyone, he would soon compensate it by his love.

About that time the discipline of the Math was very rigid. Everybody had to get up at 4 A. M., then meditate and chant Gita. Swamiji asked us to commit to memory ten stanzas a day and recite them before him daily.

In June he left for Almora. At one o'clock he came to Calcutta and before he departed he gave us a talk on 'The Gita.' Only one verse he explained. It was this :—

क्लैब्यंमास्म गमपार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रहृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तोत्तिष्ठ परब्रह्म ॥

“Yield not to unmanliness, O Son of Pritha ! Ill doth it become thee. Cast of this mean faint-heartedness, O scorcher of thine enemies !” Chap. II verse 3.

Swamiji told us that the whole secret of the Gita was contained in these words and as he explained the verse, his face beamed with an unusual lustre. Swami Yogananda and Alasinga went with him. From Almora he went to Kashmir. He did not return to us until November.

In 1898 I gave up my position as a teacher and joined the Order finally. Then the Math was already removed to Nilambar Mukerjea's house in Belur. Swami Saradananda had just returned from America. He used to take us two classes, one on the Gita and the other on Bhashyam. Swami Nirmalanandaji was holding us Upanishad classes. The classes were held very regularly. In the end of that year we moved to our present quarters in Belur. Swami Vignananandaji supervised the work of building construction. Swamiji was present when the Math was moved to its permanent quarters. For a few days he performed Rudra Yagam in the yard. In that year we were initiated into sannyas. In 1899 Swamiji left us for America and in the end of December 1900 only he came back. This time he took with him Swami Turiyanandaji. Swamiji had a very great respect for him. He used to call him “Hari Bhai.” You know Swamiji's new ideas of work were not received with full sympathy by his Gurubhais. But Swamiji used to say that under no circumstances ‘Rakhal’ (Swami Brahmananda) and his ‘Hari Bhai’ will desert him. Of Swami Turiyanandaji he used to say that he was “the ornament of the Math.” It is sufficient that Swami Turiyanandaji remained at the Math.

He was full of spiritual lustre. When Swamiji took him to America, he never expected him to deliver lectures. He wanted him to live the orthodox sannyasin's life and wanted to show to the west the life of an ideal Indian sadhu.

When Swamiji returned back, I was in Belur Math. He came without giving us any intimation beforehand. Nobody received any letter or telegram that he was coming. At 11 o'clock in the night he arrived at the gate of the Math. The gate was then closed and locked. He called the gardener ; but before he came and opened it, Swamiji jumped over the fence and walked to the Math. In the meanwhile, the gardener ran before him and informed us that a *Sahib* was waiting at the gate. When Swamiji reached the Math building, Swami Premanandaji saw him first and so he shouted out "This is *our* Sahib." That night Swamiji ate his dinner and the whole night was spent in talking. He narrated briefly some of the incidents during his visit to America. Early next year Swamiji went to Benares. I was then at Hardwar. So I wanted to see him and came down to Benares. I brought some perfumed rice for him from Hardwar. Our Asram in Hardwar was only being started then. Swami Kalyanananda was in Hrishikesh. He had a small dispensary and men used to come to him for treatment. We lived in tents and had our *Madhukari* (door to door acceptance of food) from the neighbouring villages. I hurried up to Benares to see him. When Swamiji knew that I had come, he sent word, "Tell him to come straight up to me. I want to see him in his Hrishikesh dress." When he saw me, he very fondly inquired about my health and then about our *Tapasya* and said, "I am so glad you have come. One Maharajah has promised to meet the initial expenditure for the construction of an Asram here. He has given Rs. 500. Will you take up the work?" I humbly

pleaded my inability to cope with such a work in Benares where there are many pandits who can expound the scriptures with greater ability than my own self. Hearing this plea Swamiji at once remarked, " You need not imitate others. I ask you to lead the *life* and work in your own natural way. Work sincerely and success will be surely yours. "

When Swamiji went back to Calcutta I accompanied him. Swamiji then sent Swami Shivananda and Swami Achalananda to start the Asram at Benares. This was how the Adwaita Asram of Benares was founded. I remained afterwards with Swamiji till he passed away. One morning we overslept. He punished us all for this. We were forbidden to take meals at the Math and we were asked to go to Calcutta and beg our meals. He told me that I must not go to the houses of any of my friends. I met Swami Trigunatita at Calcutta. He offered me some money, but I refused it. On my way back at the *ghat* I again met Swamiji. He enquired after my day's experience.

It is impossible to describe to you how loving Swamiji was. His broad humanitarian heart appealed most to me. He was a real *Purushottama* (the best of men). Sri Ramakrishna used to say of himself that he was all *Jnanam* within, all *Bhakthi* outside*. One day we were accompanying Swamiji for a walk along the Ganges' side. When we came in front of the Dakshineswar Temple, Swamiji began to talk on Sri Ramakrishna. Very rarely he used to talk about the Master. At every time he would begin speaking he used to become so emotional that it made it impossible for him to talk. This day he told us that he was all *Dwaitam* inside and all *Adwaitam* outside, while Sri Ramakrishna was just

*" He (Swamiji) said one day that Sri Ramakrishna, while seeming to be all *Bhakti* was really, within all *Jnana* ; but he himself, apparently all *Jnana*, was full of *Bhakti* and that thereby he was apt to be as weak as any woman. Notes on some wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda by Sister Nivedita, p.46.

the opposite. Then in his genial humour he remarked, "I have wrecked all the prospects which a promising life held out for me, by being a slave to the love of an illiterate Brahmin priest." It is not possible for me to give an idea of his intense love towards Sri Ramakrishna. Swamiji did not describe him as an *Avatar* or popularised the Master as such. He used to say that whether he was an *Avatar* or something more, he did not know ! To describe him was to belittle his greatness. Swamiji had an extraordinary love towards his *Gurubha's*. His veneration for Sri Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), knew no bounds. One day the Marwaries of Calcutta held a picnic on the banks of the Ganges in the Math. Swamiji was taking a stroll in the evening along the banks there, and in the presence of so many people, pointing to Sri Maharaj he declared, "he is our *Raja*, and we are all his servants." Swamiji had an unbounded regard for the personality of Sri Maharaj. He used to say that Sri Maharaj had the *Raja-Buddhi* (wisdom of a king) in him. Swamiji knew that Sri Maharaj was the person to be at the head of the religious order. So Swamiji appointed him as the first President of the Ramakrishna Mission. Swamiji was enjoying tolerably good health. The end came too soon. That day when he gave up his body, he had taken us one class on Panini's Grammar. He had gone out for a long walk in the evening with Swami Premananda. I remember as he came back from the walk we were sitting on the verandah of the Math, around the tea-table. Swamiji had mounted the stairs ; but he came a few steps down and addressing us said "The malarial season is coming. So those of you who have holes in their mosquito curtains, better have them mended." These were the last words I heard from him. He went up and you know how the end came.

Sri Maharaj had gone the previous day to Calcutta on business. Immediately word was sent to him. I

remember how his body was trembling when he got down from the boat. He went straight up and catching hold of Swamiji's feet began to weep like a young child. You must remember that Sri Maharaj had always possessed a strong personality and would never give vent to his emotions ordinarily. This time he was so overpowered with feelings that he held Swamiji in embrace for a long time and he had to be forcibly taken away.

SWAMI BODHANANDA

(To be continued.)

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THE DANCE OF SIVA

DR. K. N. SITARAMAN

IF art can be an index of a nation's mind, the outflow and expression of all they feel most deeply, then the Tamils take a high rank among the creative nations of antiquity and of the modern world not only for vigour and beauty, but also for the way in which they gave immortality and life to these feelings in plastic forms.

If the Tevaram or the Divine Song-Garland and the Tiruvachakam or the Beauty of the Divine Word were the work of the Tamil Saivas, then some of the precious songs and lyrics that go to compose The Four Thousand or The Nalayira-prabandam are the work of the Tamil Vaishnavas. If the Saivas can claim as theirs Appar, Manikkavachakar, Sundaramurti, Tirugnanasambandar, Tiruvalluvar and a host of others whose songs still ring through the length and breadth of the Tamil land and across the seas wherever the Tamils are, the Vaishnavas can equally claim that theirs is the heritage of the Bhagavata Purana and the Gita, books which are revered by every Hindu. Theirs also is the eternal theme of the love of Radha and Krishna—the individual soul pining for union with the Eternal—the unequalled moon of an Indian autumn, full blown lotus tanks, the cooling delight of snow fed streams in a warm climate, the dark green forest filled with the fragrance of the *Tulasi* and many a fragrant herb and flower. The Rasa Dance and all that is captivating and beautiful in a land that is so richly dowered with exquisite loveliness by nature. Andal, Pai-, Pudattu-, Namma-, and other Azhwars and Nachiyars did for the Vaishnavas what the Nayanars did for the Saivas. The same stream of Bhakti (Loving Devotion) coursed through the veins of both the sects and produced their master-pieces of song, architecture, sculpture and bronze.

Among the Indian bronzes the pride of place belongs to the Dancing Nataraja, as the Europeans have chosen to call it. Nataraja itself means 'The King of Dance' and the Nataraja figure of Siva is represented in no other attitude than that of dance; hence I do not see any reason why the European Art collections should perpetuate the mistake

in their labels, nor my countrymen slavishly imitate it. The Nataraja is the work of a school which dates from the seventh century to the present day. Hence its number is legion, some very beautiful, others far from being so. It is scattered throughout the world, England and France also having their share. By far the most beautiful ones I have seen in a public collection are in the Museum at Madras and the next best ones in the Indian Museum at South Kensington.

About the beauty of the figure we will leave our readers to judge making, however, a reservation that the best Indian work should be approached from the opposite point of view with which one views a Greek masterpiece, for Indian work is not photography in marble or bronze, where a greater attention is paid to faithfully reproduce a nerve or a vein than to represent the inner feelings of calm, anger, joy or religious devotion or exultation. One should also particularly bear in mind that the ideal of the Indian Masters is the anatomy of their own people's bodies with its curves, rhythms, lines and a rounded subdued smoothness—the result of a humane inheritance, thinking and dietary, as well as a freedom from the marks and alterations left by the bondage of conventional clothing.

Nataraja or The King of Dance is one of the names of Siva. Siva creates the world as Brahma, protects and guides it as Vishnu, and when time comes, draws it into himself and destroys it as Rudra.

The world was naught. Then the waters were produced and then the Earth. Darkness was on the face of the Earth and a silence deep as death. Siva the Vanquisher of Death (Mrityunjaya)—The Lord of Life and Creatures (Pasupati)—willed that it should once more spring into Life and glorious activity. He took His drum (Damaru) in His hand and whirled it round and round. Music was the result—the origin of speech and grammar. Flame or the Light of knowledge was in His other hand and His feet clad with anklets kept time to the *Tala* of His drum and He began to dance. Flames of glory and life sprung up all round Him and encircled Him with their wreath of gratitude coming round and round Him in *Pradakshina*. The demon of Evil *Muyalaka* arose and wanted to thwart Him in His good intentions. Siva the Principle of Goodness and Existence caught and trampled

him under one of His feet, breaking his back and dancing him to death. The other foot He raised aloft in the posture of ecstatic Dance (*Ananda Tandava*). He hung low one of His hands calling the whole Earth and the good creation to witness the downfall and annihilation of Evil. He held the other aloft in the posture of protection or 'Do not fear' (*Abhaya*). The Dance of Bliss continued until the whole of the dead and inanimate nature had once leapt into life and activity as if it had arisen from sleep.

The chief centres of this cult are Chidambaram and Tiruvalangadu in South India although at other centres of Tamil cultural life as at Madura, Tanjore and Tinnevely also, it is in full swing. Chidambaram—Chit-Ambaram—the Ether of True Knowledge or Positivity as opposed to Ignorance and Non-existence is the centre of this supreme sport of the Lord (*Lila*). *Chit* also means the heart, *Ambaram* the sky, Ether or Heaven. On the golden floor (*Kanakasabha*) of this Ether or Heaven of Knowledge (Chidambaram), the Lord delights with His dance the minds of His devotees. Hence He is symbolically represented at Chidambaram as *Akasa* and His *Linga* or image is *Akasa* too. That is the eternal secret of Chidambaram. Its (*Rahasya*) namely, the *Akasa Linga* whose subtilty or essence the human eye cannot pierce or see but the heart of the loving devotee can feel. Here on the Floors of this Hall of Gold as the Lord of Life and Music performs His dance, the heart beats of devoted humanity pulsate and keep time to the measured tread of His musical feet and to the sonorous rhythm of His anklets. The drum also adds its own quota of music and thus united, *Sat* (Goodness), *Chit* (Knowledge) and *Ananda* (Delight or Ecstatic Bliss) pulsate and transmit to the outer corners of the world the triple harmony and rhythm of His dancing feet, anklets and drum in wave after wave of ecstatic bliss.

DR. K. N. SITARAMAN

KRISHNA FOR HUMANITY*

T. L. VASWANI

THIS day, the Krishna-Day, is blessed. It is the greatest day in Hindu history. And this day there is hope in my heart.

RETURNING WAVE.

For the wave is coming back, the wave of Krishna-bhakti,—back to this backward Province of Sind. Not many today ; but thank God, groups here and groups there, —in several towns and villages of Sind,—feel drawn to the beauty of Krishna's Life and Message. Not many. They who think of Krishna are in minority. But one of the generalisations of history is :—Minorities become Majorities. Therefore I hope. May the Day come soon when the Krishna *Janmotsava* may be celebrated with enthusiasm throughout the length and breadth of the country !

KRISHNA AND ISLAM.

Better pleased would I be if I saw at this meeting, also, members of the Parsi, Muslim and Christian faiths. For Krishna, I claim, is not for the Hindus alone. Krishna is for all faiths, for all nations. His life and message have a value for Humanity. For the Parsis. The very word "Gita" is radically the same as the word "Song"—The Song of the Soul. And both Zoroaster and Krishna, we read practised *tapasya* for 30 years. Krishna's life and teaching have a message, also, for Muslims. There are Hindus who cherish deep respect for Mahomed; and one of the Upanishads is named Allah-Upanishad. *Ishopanishad* sings of *Ishwara* ; *Allah-Upanishad* sings of Allah. And name the nameless as you will, Allah or Ishwar, or Jehovah, or "Our Father which art in Heaven," is He not the One God of all religions, the One Parent-Spirit of all races? If there are Hindus who have deep respect for Mahomed there are, I believe, Muslims too who honour Sri Krishna's name. And history records at least one Muslim name,—the name of a poet who was thrilled to inspiration by his love for Sri Krishna, and who calling himself "Krishna Das" wrote fine hymns in Hindi, on Krishna and Radha.

*Notes of address at Celebration of Sri Krishna's Birthday held in Karachi.

THE FLUTE IN CHRISTIAN LANDS.

For Christians, too, the life and message of Sri Krishna have a value. A well-known Christian writer on mystical religion Rev. H. C. Sampson, in the course of a letter to me a few months ago wrote the following significant words :—"The Bhagavat Gita is a classic which I have always by my side." An American lady recently wrote to me at some length on what Sri Krishna meant to her. The joy and strength of her life are in the message of the Flute. In Europe and America there are groups of men and women who love Krishna.

IMMORTALS OF HUMANITY.

I trust the re-awakened interest in Sri Krishna will grow in Sind, in India. For upon Indians lies the responsibility to make Krishna's message better known to the nations of the West. Five Immortals of Ancient India, in my opinion, are:—Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Asoka and Mahavir. But most of them are not known to the West. Mr. Wells is a well known writer : his book "The History of the World" is, on the whole, a beautiful survey of human progress. Some time ago, he prepared a List of the "World's Greatest Men." These according to him, are,—Jesus, Buddha, Asoka, Aristotle, Bacon and Lincoln. Jesus and Buddha have both been mighty forces in history. Asoka's greatness as a king lay in turning away from War to Peace. Aristotle taught the world to appreciate *facts*. On *ascertained facts* must sciences be built. Bacon's private life was disappointing ; but he was a profound thinker ; he was the father of a *scientific* philosophy in the West. Abraham Lincoln was a profound patriot, a man of simplicity and optimism, a liberator of his People. Not without reason has he been called "the Father of the United States." But in the entire list of Mr. Wells, there is no place for Rama and Krishna! The fault is, largely, ours. We have not made known India's Heroes to the world. We have not studied them ourselves.

One great message of Krishna is :—Do thy Duty without thinking of 'fruits.' It is a message of self-renunciation. And where there is striving after self-renunciation there is humility. How humble was

Krishna !—I have said to myself as I have looked into the story of his life, incident by incident. Bare-footed he went from place to place ; his naked feet were a witness to his humility and his deep reverence for Mother-Earth. He played with poor peasants, not with the proud of power and wealth. He received in deep humility the poor man Sudama. On the Kuru-field he accepted the office not of Leader but of chariot-driver. He consented to drive the chariot under Arjuna's orders. He preferred simple meals in a poor man's cottage to a rich feast in a Raja's palace. He asked for water in a broken cup !

Sri Krishna with the Flowers of Humility. That's a Picture,—one of the very many Pictures in the wonderful Life of Sri Krishna,—I have meditated upon from time to time. That Picture I fain would leave in your hearts to-night. Krishna's greatness was the greatness of being a Little One. He taught the great truth of self-realisation through self-renunciation ; he showed the beauty of this truth in the underlying humility and *bhakti* of his daily life.

DESIRE FOR FRUIT.

To-day we work but in so much of it, alas, is *ambition*, not *humility*, *self* not Love, the desire to be "big," not the aspiration to glorify God. And Krishna comes and looks into our house and finds no light but darkness. Who are the men to lead? The simple, the humble,—not they who scramble for 'leadership'. Let a man do his *dharma* renouncing desire for "fruit," eager only to be a servant of the Lord. Such a man will the Lord bless. And out of such a man will go something, some silent forces to declare to the people in the very midst of cruel persecution :—"Here is a servant of Sri Krishna !"

WILL INDIA BE THAT NATION ?

I look around me. I survey the world's situation. I see the nations of the West. I see them hating, one the other, in the name of "patriotism." I see them, in a mad pursuit for "power," preparing to cut one another's self :—"Is there not even one nation in the world willing not to be big or great but to be a servant of Sri Krishna ? O ! will India be that Nation ? Then let us be pure

and humble. Filled with passion for work, but filled also with humility, bhakti, love. And the Nation that is humble, the Nation that has love in its heart, the Lord will take up as His Flute, and play upon it a New Song for the New Age that is coming in the Eternal Wonder of the World's Re-birth.

T. L. VASWANI

COMMENT AND CRITICISM

THE HINDU FAMILY

THE wonderful adaptability which Hindu religion based as it is on eternal Truth showed when it was brought into contact with apparently opposing faiths is equally in evidence in Hindu social structure. It is almost the fashion with some critics to say that the old joint family system of the Hindus has crumbled and disintegrated owing to the stress of modern conditions. No doubt that since the middle of the last century the institution has been preyed upon by so many transforming forces and that it has now become "plastic like clay." The interpretation of the Hindu Law Texts by Courts of Law has to a great extent proved a solvent of the ancient joint family institution and usage. Then also the impact of new ideals as to marriage itself, as to the relationship between husband and wife, have had their effect on the Hindu family system. On the one hand, it is seen that the patriarchal joint family has proved an obstacle to the realization of personality and promoted idleness and economic stagnation, acting as a brake on individual initiative and enterprise. On the other hand, the individualistic family, however successful it has been as an economic institution, has proved unstable and mercurial. There is, I think, a good deal of force in the view put forward by Prof. Radha Kamal Mukerjee in the pages of *The Modern Review* for July 1924 that these changes surrounding our life do not show that our family is disintegrating, but that "we are witnessing the transition to a nobler family". We shall see in the future none of the autocracy of the head of the family which suppresses the legitimate individuality of a family member nor the husband's overweening mastery and the wife's shrinking subservience which now masquerade behind the ex-

cusing doctrine of *Satihood*. Nor again should the ideal of fidelity be one-sided, a code of domestic ethics which forgets or minimises the significance of man's chastity. The family of the future will emerge out of the wedlock of the above contrasted ideas. We had almost wished that such a competent observer as Prof. Radha Kamal Mukerjee had devoted more space to the discussion of the last-named aspect of this interesting sociological problem which this day is a vital one in Hindu social polity.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Great truths inculcated by the Hindu religion are often ignored in practice. One such is *Ahimsa*—ceasing from causing injury to animals. Who has not witnessed with pain and abhorrence the cruel way in which bullocks and carriage horses are treated, and the miserable condition of the calves which are literally starved and butchered. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which has been doing humane work in the City of Madras has not been a day too soon in seeking the aid of Schools to form a League of Mercy in furthering the objects of the Society and in actively co-operating with it in preventing cruelty to animals. The "Animal Week" which the Society proposes to inaugurate in every educational centre in the Presidency to interest the youth of the country in actively preventing cruelty to animals should go a great way in achieving the objects which the organisers have so much at heart.

THE WAY TO PEACE

When the Liberal Party came into power, it placed in the forefront of its programme the completion of the structure of the League of Nations in order to give the world civilization, a common organization which would bring people together to enable them to understand each other. It is gratifying to note that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the British Premier, has been consistently pressing upon the nations the urgent need for perfecting the League of Nations' organization in order to give the world the peace it so much needs. Speaking at Geneva the other day, Mr. MacDonald stated that Great Britain intended every man in its power to widen and increase the influence of the League and significantly added that personally he would do his utmost to lay the foundation of peace through universal disarmament. Mr. MacDonald's own

panacea to secure world peace is through a Court of Arbitration, the constitution of which is to be governed by the various Governments who will form the Court. The idea is not novel and has everything to recommend it but the difficulty will come when the Court begins to function.

That universal peace will come from universal disarmament is a fond hope. If disarmament is to be carried out effectively, *moral* disarmament by which is meant the laying aside the feelings of suspicion and insecurity that are now undermining the basis of peace must precede *material* disarmament. In other words, we must produce the *will* to peace without which all efforts at arbitration will be in vain. In this connection, we make no apology to give an extract from the Presidential Address of Lady Parmoor at a recent meeting of the National Council for the Prevention of War :—

“Would it be unseemly in this season of war anniversaries to remind your readers that we are in a sense under a contract with those who died in the Great War? Very many of us gave those who went to the war the assurance that their death, should it be demanded of them, would not be in vain; that the victory which they brought us would be used to great and good purposes. The struggle to use that victory for the betterment of Europe is still going on. The war to end war will certainly not have achieved its professed purpose, except by the efforts of those who survive. If things drift and shape themselves in the old way we shall get the old results. Great popular demonstrations of the vitality of the intention to get away from the old war system will give courage to those in places of public responsibility who sometimes have to choose between several courses in public policy.”

ANNIE BESANT—SERVANT OF HUMANITY

In celebrating the other day at the Gokhale Hall, the golden jubilee of Dr. Annie Besant's entry into public work, Madras has only honoured herself. Differing as we may be from her politics and religion, it is but meet that we should take this opportunity of expressing our felicitations and paying our homage of respect to her great personality and abiding work in the service of humanity. It is no exaggeration to say that throughout the fifty years of her public life, there is only one goal which Mrs. Besant, placed in front of her mind's eye, namely, service to humanity. It is not possible within the space at our disposal to make even a passing reference to the manifold activities of her strenuous life nor is biographising even on a small scale an easy occupation particularly in respect of a living personality who in this body has yet to complete

her great work. She seemed to have entered on her life's work almost from the days of her girlhood, widening the sphere of her activity and usefulness as she grew in years. Irish by birth, English by marriage and Indian by adoption, she in the *role* of a citizen of the world has been consistently and systematically sounding the note for the new internationalism, forging the bonds between the East and the West. May she be long spared to serve India and humanity !

A. S.

SARVA JANA KSHEMA SABHA

or

THE UNIVERSAL WELFARE ASSOCIATION

From a memorandum explanatory of the constitution of the Association it appears that its objects are to strive for the establishment of peace and welfare in the world, and for the abolition of war and evil. The organisers are of opinion, that the cause of the world's trouble is ignorance, that is ignorance of how to help *Self along with others*. There is nothing like ill-will in the world. The aim of the Association is to show the way which consists in serving *Self through* serving others, and it is hoped that thereby would be solved the problem of universal peace and welfare. In order to carry out the purposes of the Association, it is proposed to establish branches in all towns and villages and enlist the necessary propagandic and other agencies. It is claimed that this process is the first step to nation-building on righteous lines, the people of each area being enabled to supply their wants—industrial, commercial, religious and protective—as far as possible, by themselves, through their own organs, thus making the government of the country simple and smooth and the relationship of the people one of unalloyed loyalty and lovefulness. When all the villages and towns so organised are linked together into a larger independent whole, with supply and demand mutually adjusted, they will form a “nation”. This process of linking should not stop here. It shall go on until true internationalism had been established. For that purpose, each nation should seek to be dependent on other nations for its wants. Under such relationship, there can be no mutual exploitation, which will be replaced by mutual self-service, and which again means peace and good-will unto all. When, thus, humanity living under the survey of unregulated individual will, shall have been *organised*, the other kingdoms of nature, gov-

erned as they are by instinct or immutable law, will get automatically righted, and the *Asat*, *Jada*, *Dukha* world or *Jagat* will have been transformed into the *Sat*, *Chit*, *Ananda* condition of Brahman. This, the highest promise of religion and Dharma which the Universal Welfare Association has taken upon itself to promulgate. The Association has recently been started in Trivandrum with Mr. K. G. Sesha Aiyar, Retired Judge of the High Court and Mr. N. Subrahmanya Aiyar, Retired Senior Dewan Peishkar as General Secretaries. We do not know what measure of support which this highly ambitious shall we add somewhat visionary organisation has had. It is easy to frame a paper programme of all the good things of the world, but where is there any organisation, however perfect, which can synthesise all the activities which the Association seeks to tackle. There are organisations already established which have for their object one or more of the ideals which the new organisation embraces within its programme. One who really means business will work through those organisations for achieving the particular end or ends in view. In this way only can a new organisation pool together the results of the achievements of individual organisations and travel towards the goal which it has set before itself.

RECENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

THE THEOSOPHIST :—The place of honour in the *Theosophist* for July 1924 is given to an interesting paper by Dr. Cousins and Tristram on "Some Geographical Aspects of Karma".

From what is known as to the working of the law of Karma in regard to individuals the authors go on to consider in wider aspect of the question, viz., the effect of Karma upon countries and nations.

It may be assured that there is an inter-relation between all parts of the cosmos and therefore between nations.

What national peculiarities do the nations on the earth possess, to what failings are they subject, what is the degree of their spiritual accounts these aspects of the problem are examined in their bearing on the working of Karma. Nations vary according as they are predominantly Rajasic, Tamasic or Sattvic. For instance, nations such as Japan, Italy, Spain and Peru would seem to be predominantly *Tamasic* nations which have gravitated through karmic necessity to regions of seismic catastrophe in which they may be shaken out of spiritual dullness. The nations which are predominantly Rajasic are apparently thrown into contact with other predominantly Rajasic nations and left to gather

wisdom among themselves. Compare for instance the present chaos on the Continent of Europe. The nations that are predominantly Sattvic, *c. g.*, India and Egypt, maintain the even tenor of their lives for thousands of years. History tells us that Sattvic nations are purified by coming under foreign domination for a period, and being forced in self-defence to develop a national consciousness and national self-defence.

These Sattvic countries are also the chief centres of spiritual initiation and attainment, giving to the world divine harmony, balance and liberation.

Another factor that may be considered in connection with national Karma is the existence of the three lines of spiritual development, namely, Karma, Bhakthi and Jnana or action, devotion and knowledge respectively. The suggestion is made whether it is not possible to group nations according as they are following the Karma, Bhakthi or Jnana path. The ingenious if somewhat bold assertion is made that there must be cycles in the life of a nation as in the life of an individual ego. If this position is conceded, the earthquake zone may contain the Karma nations, and the earthquakes may enable them to change their path and develop along the other lines. Great Britain may perhaps be progressing along Bhakthi, with all the faults of this line, while Germany may be on the Jnana line, with the fault of excessive pride.

The paper is highly suggestive and thought provoking and presents a fresh aspect of the Law of Karma.

A. S.

THE ROSICRUSIANS.—There is a considerable body of literature concerning the Rosicrucians. A "Rosicrucian" was more or less regarded as synonymous with an alchemist, kabbalist, occultist and the like. Reliable information on this subject was first given to the English knowinig public in a book entitled 'The Real History of Rosicrucians' by Arthur Edward Waite published in 1887. That has now been followed by a bigger book by the same author under the heading "The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross." With the materials made available in this publication, Mr. Stanley Redgrove has in the pages of the *Occult Review* for July 1924 given a short and succinct account of the early history of Rosicrucianism.

The Rosicrucian fraternity is ordinarily credited with immemorial antiquity. The term "Rosicrucian," however, is mentioned for the first time in a pamphlet published in Germany about 1614. This pamphlet, *Fama Fraternitatis* or "A Discovery of the Fraternity of the Most Laudable Order of the Rosy Cross" addresses itself to "the people in general and the Governors of Europe" whom it informs of the existence of a secret association founded over one hundred years previously. According to its own claims, the fraternity was versed in the Higher Magic, the mysteries of Kabbalism, and the *Secrets of Alchemy*, both as concerns the art of healing and the *transmutation of metals*. In regard to the last, however, it is declared that the philosophers esteemed the art but little, for their concern was not with gold, but with a spiritual quest having, as its end the general reformation

of the world. The publication of this pamphlet which was very soon followed by others, caused an immense amount of excitement at the time. And we find that in early days of the seventeenth century, Alchemy was a subject of outstanding interest, and in the philosophy of Occultism, it was hoped, would be found the solutions to the many problems that confronted mankind. Secret societies began to be formed along the lines laid down in the pamphlets. Societies concerned with occult research and especially with alchemy, which latter it was made out, connoted a spiritual quest as well as a physiological and metallic one. In 1710 we hear of an organisation in Germany calling itself, "The Brotherhood of the Rosy and Golden Cross" and claiming to be in possession of the arch-secrets of alchemy. By 1777 a remarkable change appears to have taken place in their organization, in that it had developed ceremonial forms and admitted only to membership those who had attained the degree of Master Mason.

These facts have an interest particularly at this juncture when we are told of the startling discovery made by a great German chemist of a process of making gold by disintegrating mercury and thus justifying the alchemist's dream.

The Hindu Message for June 1924 is the Sri Sankara Jayanti number and has several useful papers on the aspects of Sri Sankara's life and teachings. In a closely argued paper Prof. K. Sundararama Aiyar brings out that the Advaita doctrine of Sri Sankara, while it is primarily to be learned from the Veda itself, its realization can only be rendered possible through instruction conveyed by a teacher regarding the true import of the Maha Vakyas as interpreted in the Vedic Sampradaya transmitted through Sri Sankara to the Vedantic School which he re-found. Prof. K. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar's paper on the Two Paths—Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga—Sri Sankara being specially devoted to the former and Sri Ramanuja to the latter—is a well written one. Neither of these teachers condemns the path not specially favoured by him, as both the paths are of equal efficiency, because both lead to the same goal—Iswara Himself. Other papers in the memorial number are "To Advaitism through Psycho-analysis" and "Sri Sankara—the Man and His Method" by Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, "Sankara and Badarayana" and "The Disciples of Sri Sankara" by Mr. R. Krishnaswami Aiyar.

A. S.

NEWS AND REPORTS.

WE have much pleasure to publish the following extracts from our report of the South Indian Flood Relief work from the 22nd July to the 4th September, 1924 :—

As a result of inquiry the Swamis found that thousands of people were suffering from hunger and starvation, especially the Panchamas, Chucklers, Oddars, etc; that hundreds of houses had fallen down, especially huts, and thus many of the poorer folk had lost their all in life. The most heart-rending thing was that they were in bad need of clothing—especially the women who had not even a sheet of cloth. In Bhavani and

other places in the Coimbatore district alone, 1,667 houses (both tiled and thatched) had been washed away, the approximate loss on account of this being more than Rs. 1,55,000. In the districts of Tanjore and Trichinopoly also, conditions were similar, though the need for food relief was even greater in these places.

Actual relief operations began on the 27th July in Bhavani and Dalavaipettai centres in Coimbatore where on an average 1,500 of the poor were given food supply every day.

Poor people came as many as five or six miles from their hamlets walking to get this relief ; and from every centre, ten or twelve of the surrounding villages were given relief.

Reports having reached that Satyamangalam and Arasur were also hard hit by floods, two more centres were opened there and 1,669 people (including Mahomedans, Chucklers, Weavers, etc.) were given food grains for use. Two sub-centres at Sambally and Nerinjipet were opened in the third week of August to help about 400 families.

In the district of Tanjore, the work of distributing food-grains was made easy, since a number of workmen found employment in the repairs carried on by the P. W. D. and the Railway authorities. Only the disabled and the infirm were given rice the crying problem here being want of building materials and clothing. Centres were therefore opened in Manalmedu, Shiyali, Pattavarthi and Maharajapuram to serve the needs of 71 villages round these places.

In Trichinopoly, conditions were not settled for a long time, and so it was only in the last week of August that it was possible for us to open a centre at Srirangam to relieve the needs of 350 families. Since then, work has also commenced at Alagarai and Kodyalam.

So far then it will be seen that 12 centres have been working (during the month under report) to cover the needs of over 150 villages. The number of people relieved is over 10,000 and more than 45,000 measures of Kambu, Ragi and Rice have been distributed at a cost of Rs. 10,500.

As, at present, conditions have improved, it is proposed to stop food-relief in a week or two and concentrate all our attention on clothing and building huts. These are far more important items and relief in this direction is very much valued by the poor.

Up till now, only 1,157 cloths have been distributed : 128 in Satyamangalam, 164 in Bhavani and Dalavaipettai, 777 in Srirangam, 88 in Manalmedu, in addition to old cloths kindly presented by friends; but we require at least 2,123 cloths more at a cost of Rs. 4,907-8-0, the need being most felt in Coimbatore and Trichinopoly.

As for building materials, only 438 huts have been built up to 31st August. If we are to do the relief work at all satisfactorily, we shall have to build 500 huts for Satyamangalam, 1,000 for Bhavani and Dalavaipettai, 100 for Sambally and Nerinjipet, 250 for Kodyalam, 200 for Alagarai, 100 for Srirangam and 400 for Shiyali, Manalmedu, etc.

Thus the total comes to 4,000 huts. The cost of hut-building varies in different places and the range is from Rs. 12 to 25. Even granting that we get timber free of cost, we have still to pay Rs. 5 for a thatched roof, Rs. 6 for putting up walls, and something extra for coir, ropes, etc. The total estimated cost in this direction alone comes to Rs. 60,250. But at present, in Coimbatore, considering our finances we propose to give only Rs. 5 for a hut to cover the expenses of roofing it with palmyra leaves.

Since the 31st August, we have bought in Manalmedu alone 28,000 *kiths* and have given orders for the necessary number of bamboos.

In a few centres like Satyamangalam, Srirangam, Alagarai and Kodyalam where food relief will have to be continued for a week or two, the cost of grain required is Rs. 942-8-0 roughly.

From Malabar the Swami has written that three kinds of work are necessary there :—(a) House building, (b) opening rice-shops and selling rice to the poor at cost-price, and (c) free distribution of rice. He lays stress on the second item as the most urgent, because the traders have increased the price, six or seven rupees a bag. For this alone he wants Rs. 6,000, besides Rs. 4,000 for hut building and Rs. 2,000 for free distribution of rice—in all Rs. 12,000.

The total sum required, then, is Rs. 78,100 if we are to do justice to the work we have now undertaken in the affected areas. Hitherto we have collected Rs. 22,531-5-10 of which we have spent Rs. 14,083-10-0 leaving a balance of Rs. 8,447-11-10. We take this opportunity of thanking all those that have contributed to the successful working of the undertaking and appeal again to the generous and charitable public to help us liberally in order to relieve the suffering of thousands of our countrymen.

Contributions however small, may be sent to the following :—

1. THE PRESIDENT, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION,
BELUR, P. O. HOWRAH, BENGAL.
2. THE SECRETARY, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION,
UDBODHAN, BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA.
3. SWAMI SHARVANANDA,
PRESIDENT, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MUTT,
MYLAPORE, MADRAS.
4. C. RAMASWAMI AYYANGAR,
SECRETARY, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION,
MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Basavanagudi, Bangalore City—
From the report of the management for 1923-24 we gather that fifteen boarders were accommodated in the home at a cost of Rs. 10-12-0 each a month. The receipt for the year amounted to Rs. 1,787-15-7, and the expenditure to Rs. 1,787-5-7. The Home is located at present in a

rented building, and the boarders are maintained from public subscriptions. The management is anxious and properly anxious to have a permanent habitation for the Home and a maintenance fund out of the income of which to run the Home. It is to be hoped that the management will be able to record satisfactory progress in these directions in their next report.

BIRTH PLACE OF THE HOLY MOTHER.

AN APPEAL FOR HELP.

Jayrambati is the sacred birth-place of the Holy Mother of the Ramakrishna Order. It is a small village in the Sub-division of Vishnupur in the District of Bankura. Malaria stalks over this part of the District in rage with her train. This village and the neighbouring villages are becoming decimated every year and are becoming desolate. Those who visited this place have been painfully impressed with the havoc done annually by Malaria, Influenza, Dysentery, etc.

Srijut Lalit Mohan Chatterjee (peace be to his soul) a kind gentleman of Baghbazar, Calcutta, being deeply moved at the painful sight of the Malaria-stricken sufferers who are mostly poor and uneducated and consequently helpless, established a charitable Homoeo Dispensary of the name of Sri Sri Sarada Charitable Dispensary, early in July, 1915. He was with his own efforts bearing the expenses thereof up to 1921, the great soul departed all on a sudden and this useful institution was on the verge of extinction. It was then that the Ramakrishna Mission took over the charge of the dispensary and has been managing it since. Public sympathy and help are necessary now for the expansion of the dispensary work and to preserve its useful existence.

Secondly an educational institution is also keenly wanted in the locality. There having been no primary school even worth the name in the village or the vicinity, the Ramakrishna Mission has opened a primary school of the name of Sri Sri Sarada Vidyapitha in Jayrambati on the 17th April, 1924.

Help from abroad is urgently needed. For land must be acquired, adequate buildings constructed and necessary furniture provided.

With this two-fold object in view, we approach the generous public for help and hope that such may contribute according to their might towards them. Any amount however small, will be thankfully received and gratefully acknowledged.

(N. B.)—Contributions are to be sent to either of the following addresses :—

1. SWAMI SARADANANDA,

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission

Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazaar, Calcutta.

2. SECRETARY,

Sri Sri Matri Mandir, Jayrambati Village,

P. O. Deshra, District Bankura.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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WOMEN OF INDIA*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

[*At the Shakespeare Club House, in Pasadena, California. January 18, 1900.*]

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : “ Some present desire to ask questions about Hindu Philosophy before the lecture and to question in general about India after the lecture, but the chief difficulty is I do not know what I am to lecture on. I would be very glad to lecture on any subject, either on Hindu Philosophy, or on anything concerning the race, its history or its literature. If you, ladies and gentlemen, will suggest anything, I would be very glad. ”

QUESTIONER : “ I would like to ask, Swami, what special principle in Hindu Philosophy you would have us Americans, who are a very practical people, adopt, and what that would do for us beyond what Christianity can do ? ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : “ That is very difficult for me to decide. It rests upon you, if you find anything which you think you ought to adopt, and which will be

*A lecture hitherto unpublished in India.

helpful, you should take that. You see I am not a missionary and I am not going about converting people to my idea. My principle is, that all such ideas are good and great ; so that some of your ideas may suit some people in India, and some of our ideas may suit some people here ; so ideas must be cast abroad, all over the world."

QUESTIONER : "We would like to know the result of your philosophy : has your philosophy and religion lifted your women above our women ?"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : "You see, that is a very invidious question : I like our women and your women too."

QUESTIONER : "Well, will you tell us about your women, their customs and education, and the position they hold in the family ?"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : "Oh, yes : those things I would be very glad to tell you. So, you want to know about Indian women to-night, and not philosophy and other things ?"

The Lecture

I must begin by saying that you may have to bear with me a good deal, because I belong to an Order of people who never marry ; so my knowledge of women in all their relations, as mother, as wife, as daughter and sister, must necessarily not be so complete as it may be with other men. And then, India, I must remember, is a vast continent, not merely a country, and is inhabited by many different races. The nations of Europe are nearer to each other, more similar to each other, than the races in India. You may get just a rough idea of it if I tell you that there are eight different languages in all India. Different languages—not dialects—each having a literature of its own. The Hindi language, alone, is spoken by 100,000,000 people ; the

Bengali by about 60,000,000, and so on. Then, again, the four northern Indian languages differ more from the southern Indian languages than any two European languages from each other. They are entirely different ; as much different as your language differs from the Japanese ; so that, you will be astonished to know, when I go to southern India, unless I meet some people who can talk Sanskrit, I have to speak to them in English. Furthermore, these various races differ from each other in manners, customs, food, dress, and in their methods of thought.

Then, again, there is caste. Each caste has become, as it were, a separate racial element. If a man lives long enough in India, he will be able to tell from the features what caste a man belongs to. Then, between castes, the manners and customs are different. And all these castes are exclusive ; that is to say, they would meet socially, but they would not eat or drink together, nor intermarry. In these things they remain separate. They would meet and be friends to each other, but there it would end.

Although I have more opportunity than many other men to know women in general, from my position and my occupation as a preacher, continuously travelling from one place to another, and coming in contact with all grades of society (and women, even in northern India, where they do not appear before men, in many places would break this law for religion and would come to hear us preach and talk to us), still, it would be hazardous on my part to assert that I know everything about the women of India.

So, I will try to place before you the ideal. In each nation, man or woman represents an ideal, consciously or unconsciously being worked out. The individual is the external expression of an ideal to be embodied. The collection of such individuals is the nation, which

also represents a great ideal ; towards that it is moving. And, therefore, it is rightly assumed that to understand a nation you must first understand its ideal, for each nation refuses to be judged by any other standard than its own.

All growth, progress, well-being, or degradation is but relative. It refers to a certain standard, and each man to be understood has to be referred to that standard of his perfection. You see this more markedly in nations : what one nation thinks is good might not be so regarded by another nation. Cousin-marriage is quite permissible in this country. Now, in India, it is illegal ; not only so, it would be classed with the most horrible incest. Widow-marriage is perfectly legitimate in this country. Among the higher castes in India it would be the greatest degradation for a woman to marry twice. So, you see, we work through such different ideas that to judge one people by the other's standard would neither be just nor practicable. Therefore we must know what the ideal is that a nation has raised before itself. When speaking of different nations, we start with a general idea that there is one code of ethics and the same kind of ideals for all races ; practically, however, when we come to judge of others, we think what is good for us must be good for everybody ; what we do is the right thing, what we do not do, of course in others would be outrageous. I don't mean to say this as a criticism, but just to bring the truth home. When I hear Western women denounce the confining of the feet of Chinese ladies, they never seem to think of the corsets which are doing far more injury to the race. This is just one example ; for you must know that cramping the feet does not do one-millionth part of the injury to the human form that the corset has done and is doing—when every organ is displaced and the spine is curved like a serpent. When measurements are taken, you can

note the curvatures. I do not mean that as a criticism, but just to point out to you the situation, that as you stand aghast at women of other races, thinking that you are supreme, the very reason that they don't adopt your manners and customs shows that they also stand aghast at you.

Therefore, there is some misunderstanding on both sides. There is a common platform, a common ground of understanding, a common humanity, which must be the basis of our work. We ought to find out that complete and perfect human nature which is working only in parts, here and there. It has not been given to one man to have everything in perfection. You have a part to play ; I, in my humble way, another ; there is one who plays a little part ; here, another. The perfection is the combination of all these parts. Just as with individuals, so with races. Each race has a part to play ; each race has one side of human nature to develop ; and we have to take all these together ; and, possibly in the distant future, some race will arise in which all these marvellous individual race perfections, attained by the different races, will come together and form a new race the like of which the world has not yet dreamed. Beyond saying that, I have no criticism to offer anybody. I have travelled not a little in my life ; I have kept my eyes open ; and the more I go about the more my mouth is closed. I have no criticism to offer.

Now, the ideal woman, in India, is the mother, the mother first, and the mother last. The word woman calls up to the mind of the Hindu motherhood ; and God is called Mother. As children, every day, when we are boys, we have to go early in the morning with a little cup of water and place it before the mother, and mother dips her toe into it and we drink.

In the West, the woman is wife. The idea of womanhood is concentrated there—as the wife. To the

ordinary man in India, the whole force of womanhood is concentrated in motherhood. In the Western home, the wife rules. In an Indian home, the mother rules. If a mother comes into a Western home, she has to be subordinate to the wife ; to the wife belongs the home. A mother always lives in our homes : the wife must be subordinate to her. See all the difference of ideas.

Now, I only suggest comparisons ; I would state facts so that we may compare the two sides. Make this comparison. If you ask, "What is an Indian woman as wife ?" the Indian asks, "Where is the American woman as mother ? What is she, the all-glorious, who gave him this body ? What is she who kept me in her body for nine months ? Where is she who would give me twenty times her life, if I had need ? Where is she whose love never dies, however wicked, however vile I am ? Where is she, in comparison with her who goes to the divorce court the moment I treat her a little badly ? Oh, American women, where is she ?" I will not find her in your country. I have not found the son who thinks mother is first. When we die, even then, we do not want our wives and our children to take her place. Our mother !—we want to die with our head on her lap once more, if we die before her. Where is she ? Is woman a name to be coupled with the physical body only ? Aye ! the Hindu mind fears all those ideals which say that the flesh must cling unto the flesh. No, no ! Woman ! thou shalt not be coupled with anything connected with the flesh. Thy name has been called holy once and forever, for what name is there which no lust can ever approach, no carnality ever come near, than the one word, mother ? That is the ideal in India.

I belong to an Order very much like what you have in the Mendicant Friars of the Catholic Church ; that is to say, we have to go about without very much in the way of dress and beg from door to door, live thereby, preach

to people when they want it, sleep where we can get a place—that way we have to follow. And the rule is that the members of this Order have to call every woman “mother ;” to every woman and little girl we have to say “mother ;” that is the custom. Coming to the West, that old habit remained and I would say to ladies, “Yes, mother,” and they are horrified. I couldn’t understand why they should be horrified. Later on, I discovered the reason : because that would mean that they are old. The ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood—that marvellous, unselfish, all-suffering, ever-forgiving mother. The wife walks behind—the shadow. She must imitate the life of the mother ; that is her duty. But the mother is the ideal of love ; she rules the family, she possesses the family. It is the father in India who thrashes the child and spansks when there is something done by the child, and always the mother puts herself between the father and the child. You see it is just the opposite here. It has become the mother’s business to spank the children in this country and poor father comes in between. You see, ideals are different. I don’t mean this as any criticism. It is all good, this what you do, but our way is what we have been taught for ages. You never hear of a mother cursing the child ; she is forgiving, always forgiving. Instead of “Our Father in Heaven,” we say “Mother” all the time ; that idea and that word are ever associated in the Hindu mind with Infinite Love, the mother’s love being the nearest approach to God’s love in this mortal world of ours. “Mother, oh Mother, be merciful ; I am wicked ! Many children have been wicked, but there never was a wicked mother :” so says the great saint Ramprasad.

There she is—the Hindu mother. The son’s wife comes in as her daughter, just as the mother’s own daughter married and went out ; so her son married and brought in another daughter, and she has to fall in line under the

government of the queen of queens, my mother. Even I, who never married, belonging to an Order that never marries, would be disgusted if my wife, supposing I had married, dared to displease my mother. I would be disgusted. Why? Don't I worship my mother? Who is she, then, that would try to ride over my head and govern my mother. She has to wait till her womanhood is fulfilled; and the one thing that fulfils womanhood, that is womanliness in woman, is motherhood. Wait till she becomes a mother; then she will have the same right. That, according to the Hindu mind, is the great mission of woman—to become a mother. But oh, how different! Oh, how different! My father and mother fasted and prayed, for years and years, so that I would be born. They pray for every child before he is born. Says our great law-giver, Manu, giving the definition of an Aryan: "He is the Aryan, who is born through prayer." Every child not born through prayer is illegitimate, according to the great law-giver. The child must be prayed for. Those children that come with curses, that slip into the world, just in a moment of inadvertence, because that could not be prevented—what can we expect of such progeny. Mothers of America, think of that! Think, in the heart of your hearts, are you ready to be women? Not any question of race or country, or that false sentiment of national pride. Who dares to be proud in this mortal life of ours, in this world of woes and miseries? What are we before this infinite force of God? But I ask you the question to-night: "Do you all pray for the children to come? Are you thankful to be mothers, or not? Do you think that you are sanctified by motherhood, or not?" Ask that of your minds. If you don't, your marriage is a lie, your womanhood is false, your education is superstition, and your children, if they come without prayer, will prove a curse to humanity.

See the different ideals now coming before us. From motherhood comes tremendous responsibility. There is the basis, start from that. Well, why is mother to be worshipped so much ? Because our books teach that it is the pre-natal influence that gives the impetus to the child for good or evil. Go to a hundred thousand colleges, read a million books, associate with all the learned men of the world—better off you are when born with the right stamp. You are born for good or evil. The child is a born god or a born demon : that is what the books say. Education and all these things come afterwards—are a mere bagatelle. You are what you are born. Born unhealthful, how many drug stores, swallowed wholesale, will keep you well all through your life ? How many people of good, healthy lives were born of weak parents, were born of sickly, blood-poisoned parents ? How many ? None—none. We come with a tremendous impetus for good or evil : born demons or born gods. Education or other things are a bagatelle.

Thus say our books : direct the pre-natal influence. Why should mother be worshipped ? Because she made herself pure. She underwent harsh penances sometimes to keep herself as pure as purity can be. For, mind you, no woman in India thinks of giving up her body to any man ; it is her own. The English, as a reform, have introduced at present what they call “ Restitution of Conjugal rights,” but no Indian would take advantage of it. When a man comes in physical contact with his wife, the circumstances she controls, through what prayers and through what vows ! For that which brings forth the child is the holiest symbol of God himself. It is the greatest prayer between man and wife, the prayer that is going to bring into the world another soul fraught with a tremendous power for good or for evil. Is it a joke ? Is it a simple nervous satisfaction ? Is it a brute enjoy-

ment of the body ? Says the Hindu : no, a thousand times, no !

But then, following that, there comes in another idea. The idea we started with was that the ideal is the love for the mother—herself all-suffering, all-forbearing. The worship that is accorded to the mother has its fountain-head there. She was a saint to bring me into the world ; she kept her body pure, her mind pure, her food pure, her clothes pure, her imagination pure, for years, because I would be born. Because she did that she deserves worship. And what next follows ? Linked with motherhood is wifehood.

You Western people are individualistic : I want to do this thing because I like it ; I will elbow every one. Why ? Because I like to. I want my own satisfaction, so I marry this woman. Why ? Because I like her. This woman marries me. Why ? Because she likes me. There it ends. She and I are the only two persons in the whole, infinite world, and I marry her and she marries me ; nobody else is injured, nobody else responsible. Your Johns and your Janes may go into the forest and there they may live their lives ; but when they have to live in society, their marriage means a tremendous amount of good or evil to us. Their children may be veritable demons, burning, murdering, robbing, stealing, drinking, hideous, vile.

So, what is the basis of the Indian's social order ? It is the caste law. I am born for the caste ; I live for the caste. I do not mean myself, because, having joined an Order, we are outside. I mean those that live in civil society. Born in the caste, the whole life must be lived according to caste regulation. In other words, in the present-day language of your country, the Western man is born individualistic, while the Hindu is socialistic—entirely socialistic. Now, then, the books say, if I allow you freedom to go about and marry any woman you like,

and the woman to marry any man she likes, what happens? You fall in love ; the father of the woman was, perchance, a lunatic or a consumptive. The girl falls in love with the face of a man whose father was a roaring drunkard. What says the law then ? The law lays down that all these marriages would be illegal. The children of drunkards, consumptives, lunatics, etc., shall not be married. The deformed, humpbacked, crazy, idiotic—no marriage for them, absolutely none, says the law.

But the Mohammedan comes from Arabia and he has his own Arabian law ; so the Arabian desert law has been forced upon us. The Englishman comes with his law ; he forces it upon us, so far as he can. We are conquered. He says, "To-morrow I will marry your sister." What can we do ? Our law says, those that are born of the same family, though a hundred degrees distant, must not marry, that is illegitimate, it would deteriorate or make sterile the race. That must not be, and there it stops. So, I have no voice in my marriage, nor my sister. It is the caste that determines all that. We are married sometimes when children. Why ? Because the caste says if they have to be married any way without their consent, it is better that they are married very early, before they have developed this love ; if they are allowed to grow up apart, the boy may like some other girl, and the girl some other boy, and then something evil will happen ; and so, says the caste, stop it there, I don't care whether my sister is deformed, or good looking, or bad looking : she is my sister, and that is enough ; he is my brother, and that is all I need to know. So, they will love each other. You may say, "Oh, they lose a great deal of enjoyment—those exquisite emotions of a man falling in love with a woman, and a woman falling in love with a man. This is a sort of tame thing, loving each other like brothers and sisters, as though they have to." So be it, but the Hindu

says, "We are socialistic. For the sake of one man's or woman's exquisite pleasure we don't want to load misery on hundreds of others."

There they are—married. The wife comes home with her husband ; that is called the second marriage. Marriage at an early age is considered the first marriage, and they grow up separately with women and with their parents. When they are grown, there is a second ceremony performed, called a second marriage. And then they live together, but under the same roof with his mother and father. When she becomes a mother, she takes her place in turn as queen of the family group.

(To be continued)

THE SOUL'S VICTORY

SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

THE soul's victory is declared to be the highest consummation of our existence. That is the ideal which has been held aloft before mankind from ancient times to these modern days by all the great Teachers and Masters. To many it may appear as an impracticable idea, to others as an indefinite, hazy one. Yet the ideal is there and in all the Scriptures of the world, in the life records of all the great sages and Saviours, this ideal is depicted in different ways. Either figuratively, or in plain words, the ideal is described, but the ideal is of the victory, the final conquest in the battle, the long struggle, the soul will have to go through.

In some of the ancient books it is described in this way :—"The Devas are always fighting the Asuras, and sometimes the Asuras get the upper hand, at other times the Devas win the victory, but the soul is the seat of war, and these two opposing forces are always fighting." In the teachings of Zoroaster, as recorded in the Zend Avesta, we find the same idea—good and evil are constantly clashing. The soul is the seat of struggle, but ultimately the soul emerges as victor in the long struggle. The same idea was taken up by Christianity. We see in the life of the great Master of Galilee that when he was spending his days in contemplation and divine communion, the Prince of Evil appeared and offered him the dominion of all the world. In that temptation there was the greatest fight and struggle of the soul and the victory was achieved. We read that when Buddha was sitting under the Bo tree, Mara, the Tempter, put before him every obstacle to his calm contemplation for the attainment of illumination, and that then there was the greatest struggle of the soul and the greatest victory. We

read in one of the Upanishads how the little boy-sage Nachiketas, dared to enter the house of Death to learn the secrets of the soul, wisdom regarding the hereafter and the destination of the soul, and how Yama, Lord of Death, in trying to test this boy-sage, offered him instead all the pleasures, luxuries and possessions of the mortal realms which the soul can withstand—all the great bondages of the soul in life's struggle ; every inducement for his enjoyment was thrown in the way, but the boy-sage remained unmoved and won the victory. He would not yield for anything, he wanted Divine Wisdom. The greatest luxuries of heavenly places could not tempt him ; he sought for the knowledge of the Divine, knowledge of the Spirit, and won.

In this way, if we study the lives of the great sages, of the prophets and masters, we will see the struggle they had to go through and also see the great conquest and victory. There is the great idea of hope and courage offered to us ; there is the consolation which comes down to us through the different ages : we are souls destined to be free, unfettered, to win the victory, however overwhelming the difficulties appear to be and the struggles beyond control—there is the ideal of conquest. There is the greatest hope of conquest given to us if we remain true to the Ideal. Let us hold on to the Ideal and try our best to understand the Ideal, leaving aside all the material concerns and interests which confront us from day to day. Through all the daily struggles and conflicts, if we can cling to the Ideal in the face of such difficulties, in the teeth of all these obstacles, we have really won to a great extent. So we should try to understand the idea properly.

What is meant by conquest ? It seems peculiar that the soul should be at the mercy of so-called good and evil influences. Coming to the practical field, we see that we have to fight—our whole

life means fight and we live because of the struggle. Our life is based on the struggle for existence. We have to fight with the laws of nature. There is the physical fight the weak are tyrannized over the stronger, and the law of nature try to crush us out of existence. Then over and above all physical forms of conflict there is the greater struggle and difficulty which confronts us—the mental fight. It is the internal struggle ; so many passions, emotions, peculiar motives, created ideas—that is twisted ideas desires in all kinds of forms arising from our habits and circumstances, and desire in subtle form. They all try to overcome us and then there is the greatest fight for life; when these evils come we face difficulties in the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual worlds. In all the different activities of life we are affected by these things. At times we rise above them, at others we succumb to all sorts of conditions. Consciously or unconsciously we are affected and handicapped by many things, and yet why ? Have we not listened to the idea again and again that the true nature of the soul is Divine ? Is it not a fact that, being of Divine origin, being of the essence of the Divine, we have that potentiality, of divine inspiration and strength ?

We are created in the image of God, the Bible says and the Vedas declare that souls are part of the Divine Spirit, sparks emanating from that divine fire—the reflection of God. The Koran says: “The soul is the breath of God.” Whether in the language of Greek mythology, or in the language of clear, philosophical thought, we see that one light of Truth, that which stands luminously above all other ideas, the divine origin and essence of the soul. As such, how can we manifest weakness in any way ? It is difficult to understand, yet it is so. Turning to the practical field, we see the two opposite natures working in our life ; one tries to take us beyond these struggles, the other wants to keep us within the struggle ; one tries to fill our mind, heart and soul with

most uplifting, vitalizing ideas, the other tries to fill our mind and soul only with weakening, degenerating ideas. Naturally enough from ancient times these antagonistic natures are named good and evil, or, from their sources, God and devil. In different forms of religion we are given these two ideas, but through analysis alone, we cannot give them up. Unless and until we can relate these two ideas properly and trace them to the Absolute Source they appear as opposite. We cannot rationally declare that there are two forms of existence, because ultimate analysis cannot but arrive at the One, the Absolute. Yet we live in and through all these things and consequently we have to adopt certain general standards according to our rational ideas and suited to our particular solution of the problem. We should take one general standard, because, basing all our propositions on that one fundamental idea the divine nature of the soul, we must know that that light can never be extinguished, that the divine nature of the soul cannot be destroyed. It is of the Immortal, of the Eternal Substance of the universe and as such there is no death or destruction for it; it can only be hidden, or covered. So we can take in that sense that even the darkness which covers the light of the soul should be illumined and that which really can reflect properly the light within should be taken as good. This method leads us more surely towards the discovery of that light ; it leads us higher and higher, nearer and nearer, to the goal, the Ideal.

Looking at the subject from a deeper and subtler standpoint, we get another idea : the victory depends upon the attainment of strength, and in order to gain and renew our strength from day to day, we must know that we have to struggle. We should not be scared at this idea that we have to fight or struggle, we should first of all try to know what is to be attained and that is, we have to become divine. Bring that idea

into life. The conquest depends upon the fullest manifestation of our divine nature, the fountain-head of strength, and according to the station in life in which we are placed, we have to struggle. We have to place ourselves under certain rules and regulations. Many of us have such false ideas of freedom that if we are not allowed to act according to our own little impulses, we think we are losing our freedom, when really we are showing our weakness by not being able to conquer. Many of us imagine that by placing ourselves under prescribed rules and forms of training that we are losing our independence, giving up our freedom, but how can we attain to real freedom and independence, how can we manifest that highest strength unless we start from the place where we are? As the Master said "There is the little plant. It is in danger of being eaten by some animals or destroyed by others, so we put a hedge around the plant. It grows under the protection of the hedge; when it becomes a tree, take the hedge away—no longer is there any necessity for the hedge." You see that our little idea of self-conquest is like a plant in its growth and now we have to put a hedge around it, a hedge of discipline, of proper struggle, and of definite training. Through such practices and proper culture we can hope to go beyond the necessity of struggle, the necessity of the protecting hedge.

Only the two extreme types of men need no training. One is the God-man, the sage, or the illumined soul who has really conquered in the struggle, as shown in the lives of Jesus, of Buddha and ideal God-men—the great Messengers who appear to us in different ages. Even they show by their life-efforts that we need to struggle and by their life-conquest, they show it can be achieved. Such ideal lives as those of these Masters and Messengers of truths are like moulds and we have to cast our life in such a mould or form and shape it to this ideal. We will have to live and grow in such a manner until we reach that ideal. Such God-men, such great examples and tea-

chers of humanity, do not need training or further effort ; they have risen above the necessity. Then the other type is the brute man, the man of a savage, idiotic, confused and deluded nature—the man who, in the midst of peculiar situations, does not understand. In him there is no intelligence, he does not struggle, but goes through life's journey as if half dead. He has not come into that state of struggle of the intermediate stages ; thus deluded, not knowing his own condition, such a man does not have the proper training.

The greatest danger in life is self-deception ; many deceive themselves by trying to throw dust into the eyes of others, thinking they may hide their nature, but sooner or later they reveal themselves. There is such a thing as involuntary, mechanical, sub-conscious slavery, or self-deception, and the sooner we get out of this state it will be for us the better. We all need training, even the genius, so-called, otherwise he becomes a crank, fanatical and confused in the end.

So be imbued with this idea, that we have to place ourselves under discipline, that through wise guidance and proper culture we are going to throw off these bondages and manifest our true strength. Use any kind of training one wishes to, while gathering strength, only do so gradually, as all strength-gaining is slow. We may study all the Scriptures of the world, we may give learned discourses, but are we gaining strength by manifesting from day to day that divine life from within ? Those efforts reveal the power of the soul. Ask within, analyse within, whether that power is being manifested. It is there, it is never destroyed ; it may be hidden by the mists of ignorance, but it is there.

According to our natures we need various ways to manifest the strength of the soul. Sincere prayer from the bottom of our heart is one way. But prayer does

not mean repeating studied words from the books ; this is not helpful. If we try to understand the meaning, the true significance of prayer, we find it is the hungering of the soul to come in touch with the Fountain-head of strength, an earnest out-pouring of the soul towards that Fountain-head, and such prayers are always effective. Pray from the bottom of the heart, just imbue heart and soul with the idea that we are going to get strength and, as it were, empty our soul out at the feet of the Lord and strength *will* come, as it has come again and again in the lives of the great teachers of the world and it will come to us, because every one is a great teacher in embryo.

Study the basic, fundamental facts of life regarding the soul. The divinity is there, for each soul is potentially divine. Ours is to manifest that divinity within work, or in any other way, but do it. The Christ idea obtained, either by prayer, worship, or unselfishness is the greatest achievement we can make in life, and prayer means that. What is worship ? Worship, properly defined, is the constant remembrance of the ideal. Remember the ideal, worship the highest, fill mind and soul with the ideals of greatness, either in a personal or an impersonal way. Out of such constant remembrances and proper efforts, great achievements are possible. That is worship. To always remember the divine ideal through our works and our duties in life, through all kinds of ideas, we should make as our primary effort in our worship. True worship and true meditation are one and the same. In meditation we try to keep our minds fixed on the high ideal and, gradually colouring our minds with the idea, we become worthy of it, we pursue it, and become identified with the ideal, receive inspiration therefrom.

There are two things absolutely necessary for all persons of whatever nature and temperament. When

Sri Krishna was teaching His great disciple Arjuna the different paths to Yoga, Arjuna became again and again confused and deluded, and asked the question "Lord, I find it almost impossible to conquer and control the elements ; to control and conquer this unruly mind, I find it to be very difficult. I would almost give it up." The Master, with a divine smile, said : " O, my son, it may be difficult, but difficulties come in life to be overcome and to test our strength. Without difficulties we would be inactive, for, when everything moves smoothly we never struggle. When tempests rage and roar and there appear to be insurmountable difficulties, it is then that the eyes are opened and light shines forth." *Vairagyam* means giving up that form of self-sufficiency in which one deludes himself into believing that he knows everything. The Masters say : " I learn as long as I live." How can we have learned everything ? That self-sufficient attitude really clogs the channels of our receptive natures, so let us conquer it. It comes from ignorance. Imbued with the spirit of humility we can learn from all sources ; open the doors and windows of heart and soul, try to learn—that should be our attitude. *Vairagyam* is that dissatisfaction with things as they are. When we are satisfied with the state in which we are, no higher attainment is possible to achieve in our life ; therefore be discontented to a certain extent. If great scientists had been satisfied no new discoveries would have been made. No, they were dissatisfied and that is why we have the scientific marvels of to-day in all the fields of knowledge. Out of such *Vairagyam* or dissatisfaction, true achievements proceed. Next thing needed is *Abhyasa* or practice. Take up a method and practice ; do not stop half-way. The Masters say we can get teachers by the hundred, but that there are few real students. Every one is ready to teach without learning, every one is ready to manifest his wisdom in that way,

but very few are sincere and willing to learn. We should always place ourselves in the attitude of the learner—that is the only way to do. Take up any path and practice. Practice means repeated efforts ; we may fail often, but we have still to strive in. By forming habits we have placed ourselves in certain position where failure is natural. Stand up whenever you fall, fight again, never allow yourself to be crushed, and out of such struggles will come the victory.

Each one should save one's self by one's self, by the assertion of his higher nature, knowing that the victory is waiting for him, because it is within. By the assertion of that ideal, by doing your best, try to save yourself. Be ready to free yourself from the bondage of the mind, the bondage of undue passions, undue emotions and other obstacles. Never mind a defeat ; only from many defeats has one true conquest been made, from many failures success has been built up. So never mind defeats, rather be ready to struggle. Pray, and, if you are sincere, you will see how you are gaining strength from day to day, freedom from day to day ; you will see how you are rising above little things which before appeared to be almost impossible of conquest. They are a part of your struggle and you are becoming superior to all of these things.

SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

REASON AND FAITH

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

WHEN there is quarrel between religion and religion, one is sure to find out, if one observes closely that the feud enures, not because of religion, but because the people have become irreligious—they have forgotten the essential truths of their religion or at best they have not the ardour and the intensity to follow them in practice. When the whole mind is bent upon realising the truths of any religion,—and without that religion can hardly be brought into our life—we cannot have the surplus energy to look into the affairs of others and not to speak of, to have the readiness to fight with them, because they are on the false track. No religion is so bad but gives an ample opportunity to make one's life better to help one—to go Godward and thereby kill the hunger of the world for wars and battle, feuds and quarrels, national or international directly or indirectly. So the religious quarrel is an expression which contradicts itself. We must seek the cause elsewhere.

As between religion and religion, similar strife arises within a religion when it is in a downward way towards degradation. Within a short time of the passing away of Buddha, his religion split up, till at last we find so many schools of Buddhism at the present day, which differ as widely from each other, as two different religions, and who knows if in the debris, the real words of the Master have not been well-nigh lost.

Christ was one individual who gave out his message to the world, for the regeneration of humanity, but now we find so many hundreds of sects in Christianity, so many interpretations and interpolation about the words of the great Master, while somebody will have the impudence enough to doubt the historicity of the Saviour himself. The fact is, in order to understand a man or a prophet, we must be one like him. The farther we fall off from him, the greater the difference and the keener the strife on that. When the sun is up high in the sky, it exposes and burns up many of the impurities of the earth which gather again in the darkness of the night. Nearer religion we live, the less animosity between different sects and

religions, but after some time we oust religion altogether and plunge into internecine struggle in the sacred name of God and term it our religious zeal. No religion requires any external protection, if its internal life is all right and without that religion will defeat the real purpose for which it stands.

It is interesting to see how religion declines and how gradually we fall away from religion without our notice. Religion demands that we must have faith because it goes much farther than reason can approach. In religion, to solve the problems of that unexplored land we have to tread the ground, where the light of reason is too faint to illumine our path, where only faith can sustain us. This has been the shelter for all credulity in the world and all mischiefs that are done in the name of religion. This has been the point, where every man that raises any questionings or doubt can easily be thwarted or any man can be attempted to swallow any pill that any miracle or mystery-monger likes. Nobody denies that the ways of God are mysterious, but every mystery is not the work of God. We forget that we are to pass through the sea of intellectual doubt, before we can reach the safe shore of faith, which will be its own security. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, 'Remove hence to yonder place'; and it shall be removed"—how true the words are! But how few are those, who can have that tremendous faith? The result is many simply waver between doubt and credulity and run the risk of either being scorched for life, or falling into a quagmire, from which there is no rise again. We forget that only after a long struggle, we can have that reason which can be trusted or that faith which is true,—and that not before our lower self has altogether been burnt. Till then, there is no shame in having recourse to either—very often to put our faith into the anvil of reason or to let our reason be winged with faith. For both faith which is in fear of reason and reason which has no strength for action come to nought. But blessed are those persons, who come in contact with men, whom to obey means to go forward, to trust means to be strong, to love means to be invincible. The pity is such persons, though not scarce are very rare in the world. So the rest of humanity have to plod through chimerian darkness in land, where for a long time there is no trusted guide or safe light, excepting his sincerity of the struggle.

Without due balance between reason and faith, we cannot very often understand the spirit of the Scriptures and words of sages and prophets, and so we fight with the letter and write hundred useless commentaries on a simple piece of advice that dropped from the lips of a master but went straight into the heart of his disciple without the help of a linguist. Sometimes our heart is torn away to give up a custom, which had some use in one time, but no longer serves any purpose only because it has become a part and parcel of a religion due to the sanction of time. All these happen because we have not a reason, which can penetrate into the nature of things or a faith which can get over the weakness of mind. Possessed of child-like faith, any advice is sufficient for us, because that itself has got a flow of life, which breaks down all opposition, but without that faith turns into bigotry and meaningless superstition, as rationalism very often ends in a theism. Both are sources of great danger to the society as well as religion itself.

From theory, when we go to practice, we meet with greater difficulties, internal as well as external. A false sense of religion sometimes makes us weak in mind and spirit, curbs our activity and unconsciously we hug into our bosom a sort of "pious imbecility" in the name of religion and shamelessly go to the extent of even gloating over it. When we really feel even to a slight extent that "we are He" or a "part of He" we find a strength within, which defies the whole universe and once we leap up to an ethereal height, where even joy cannot reach us, not to speak of woes. Far behind we leave this world with its daily round of deceitful pleasure and heart-breaking pains and when we come back, we are altogether 'fresh beings' bathed in a new shore, and talk things, which others understand not but gapingly wonder at. We make the same mistake about prayer. Prayer does not mean imploring to a tyrant Jupiter, who at any moment is ready to throw the thunderbolt upon us, prayer does not signify to beg for drops of Manna, to be dropped from heaven, it does not indicate to vie with one another how to be more and more sheepish, how to make a more and more parade of our weakness and sins, real or assumed, but true prayer means the assertion of our rights as inheritors of Immortal Bliss, as sons and daughters of an affectionate father or a loving mother. If we have strayed away, it is not our nature, it is a maya. The more we forget that, the better for us. So a healthy form of

prayer proceeds not so much from weakness, as from strength--it is not a piteous cry to escape from the clutches of Satan to whom we are eternal victims, but a bold attempt to defy and suppress him. Very few can remember that, when the time of test comes and we make our life a long tale of piteous wail.

And when we fail even in action and practice, religion to us becomes a bundle of superstition and creeping fears. We miss to keep a healthy outlook over life. We spend our whole energy to find out what is auspicious or inauspicious, whether our destiny is ruled by a Zeus in the star or a man in the moon, whether planetary influence has got a stronger effect upon our life or our personal exertions—whether we should bow before God or prostrate before Him—we feel that we are inviting the deadliest wrath of heaven by a single instance of oversight in the observance of the minutest detail of an unimportant religious formula—all these because our heart is away, our love for God is not so strong that it can drown all petty considerations that make us falter at every step ; because we have not the vigour enough to rise up and knock at the gate till it is opened and so with vengeance we dip into the stinking ditch, there to wallow and roll and spread the contagion on all sides. When the mind is weak we swallow everything that is given in the name of religion, we become easy prey to charlatans and cheats, we bind down society with all sorts of fetters and make a frantic effort to preserve the form where the substance is gone, to make a show of the crust where the kernel is dried up and every religion says it is the best in the world.

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

RUYSBROECK, THE ADMIRABLE

DR. A. U. MOSCA

“**T**HERE is a means of knowledge which passeth understanding : a real divine madness. The like only knows the like : the senses, the sensible ; intelligence, the intelligence ; one, the one. As the intelligent soul goes beyond understanding, then only it completely loses itself. Adhering to unity, resting in peace, grasping all knowledge, mute and silent : this is the divine operation of the soul. He who is able to attain to this is freed from the fetters of authority. He has reached safety not only from external mutations but also from the whirlpool of internal oscillations. He has become God.”

Thus attempting the extreme settlement of Platonic tradition in which Hellenistic speculation shed forth its last lustre, Proclus appointed to human spirit, as its highest aim, the forsaking of its transient possibilities of action and its merging in the Absolute.

With the ‘crumbling down of the Athenian and Roman civilizations, the gradual absorption of Neo-Platonism by rising Christianity slowly developed into the great mystical blossoming of the early middle ages.

But the coercive exclusion of the Church closely circumscribed the field of researches and the splendid structure of Plotinus’ doctrine of emanation is twisted into a narrow relationship between a personal deity and a personal creature. The one immense, the other small, but both limited by the very conception of their identity with the world of manifestation.

The aim of scholastic mysticism was to point out the way to realise the unity of the creature with the Creator. It was a practical science in which all the steps of the absorption of the smaller into the greater were clearly stated ; but the value of that greater, its nature and its attributes were dogmatically fixed by a jealous theology. Feelings had full sway while intellect was banished. Mysticism was completely permeated by the dogma of the Church and tolerated in so far as realization came through the integral acceptance of the Church’s intermediacy. So mysticism, which is by no means

a voluntary discarding of reason and submission to external authority, had been changed in its very nature by Erigena and transformed into a tool of scholasticism.

However this fettering of the very nature of mysticism was gradually, if slowly, removed by the efforts of Bernard de Clairvaux and the monks of St. Victor. The 12th century witnesses a strong reaction against the growing formalism of the Church. This reaction gave birth to numberless sects, often greatly differing from one another even in their fundamental tenets, until the springing up of German mysticism, under the influence of Meister Eickhart and Ruysbroeck, brought the doctrine and the practice back to the sounder basis of Neo-Platonism.

It is not in the scope of this paper to give more than a very cursory view of the field in which Ruysbroeck formulated his doctrine, lived his life accordingly and realised that union with God which he describes so splendidly in his inspired writings. We shall not attempt any parallelism between his conception of God and Eickhart's but to such an extent as is indispensable to the understanding of his doctrine.

Eickhart pointed out the aim of spiritual life as being the attainment of perfect "Gelassenheit," the Inaccessible Imperiturbability, through metaphysical speculation. Ruysbroeck taught the search for God through introspection; the turning of the soul inwards to the contemplation and the merging of itself with the "Unplumped Abyss" as he conceives God to be. "To imbibe and understand God beyond any analogy, as He is in Himself, means to be God with God, without mediation or difference, apt to interpose between Him and ourselves any obstacle or line of division."

It is a re-statement of Proclus' conception which after nine centuries and innumerable deformations returns at last to its original form and meaning.

Very sad, indeed, were the condition of Flanders and Brabant at the close of the 13th century. Struggles were going on throughout the country for a better political settlement, to which was added the unreduceable antagonism between noblemen and artisans. Both parties endangering the destiny of their common fatherland in an internal continuous battling, while the Emperor and the King of France were watching their progressive exhaustion to fall on the unprotected country. When in the year 1293 Johan van Ruysbroeck was

born at a small village close to Bruxelles, on the borders of the thick forest of Soignes, the terrible revolution of 1280 was not yet forgotten, nor its waste mended. The artisans driven to despair by the extortions of the noblemen had fought without quarters and snatched from the weakened hands of a debauched nobility their franchise. But the struggle was not to end. Unable to guard its own interests, nobility, forgetting all consideration for the common country, called to the rescue of its tottering privileges, Philip the Handsome, King of France, who, entering the country swept before his iron-clad knights the bands of the peasantry.

But the soul of the people is often more responsive to the elementary rights of ethical and spiritual autonomy than that of the aristocracy. While the Flemish noblemen were throughout the country entertaining the Knights of the Lily, the people organised the mutiny. Popular anger burst out unexpected, terrible, and the streets of Bruges were washed in the blood of the French and Flemish nobility. A relentless warfare culminating in the battle of Courtrai and the hecatomb of golden spurred knights sent a shiver throughout Europe. The French defeat was crushing and Flanders were free.

A period of uncertainty followed during which the moral level of the people rapidly decreased to a point seldom reached by any community since the disappearance of the Western Roman Empire under the crushing blows of the Goths.

It is in those periods of desperate disgregation that exceptional souls arise unrestrainedly to the vision and the experience of the eternal value of the Absolute. The mystic vocation of Ruysbroeck has its foundation in the social and political tragedy of bleeding Flanders and demoralised Brabant.

As a Priest at Bruxelles, chaplain of St. Gudula under the direction of his uncle, Ruysbroeck lived in the roaring of the tumultuous city, an uninterested stranger. The world around him was whirling in a frenzy of social struggles, bloody repressions, religious controversy. Crowds of pseudo-mystics, known as Beghards or Brothers of the Free Spirit, were incessantly pouring in from Germany, travelling in batches, where men and women promiscuously mixed together, gave the people an encouragement towards the satisfaction of the most degenerating tendencies under the cover of religion. Around the bands of the woman Bloemardina, an enigmatic heretic preaching the spirit of unrestrained liberty, enthusiasts used to gather

in numbers. The people were unable or unwilling to distinguish between the true evangelical spirit and the dirty deformation which was offered to their worst tendencies.

It is then that Ruysbroeck from the peaceful seclusion of his humble parsonage raises the voice of his mysticism, fed with asceticism, purification and renunciation. There is no violence in his utterings, no sourness in his teaching but an unquenchable love for God and pity for all those who, forsaking the ineffable joy of the Union with Him, closed obstinately their ears to His voice calling in unfathomable depths of their hearts, to answer the luring of unwise selfishness and brutish materiality. A subtle and concealed spirit of polemics enlivens his first writings. The Ornament of Spiritual Marriage is the most remarkable of his works.

But the main thought of his writings is more towards the means whereby the Union with God is to be attained than towards mere speculative metaphysics or aggressive polemics. His, is the heart of a happy lover, who would have all beings responsive to the same joy as beams in him.

"God wills," says he, "that we should come forth from ourselves in this Eternal Light ; that we should pursue in a supernatural manner that image which is our true life, and that we should possess it with Him actively and fruitively in eternal blessedness . . . this going forth of the contemplative is also love" ; and again " Thus do we grow (by contemplation) and carried above ourselves, above reason, into the very heart of love, there do we feed according to the spirit ; and taking flight for the Godhead by naked love, we go to the encounter of His Spirit, which is His Love. "

But one day the call of the forest came upon him. His mind began to shrink from the contamination of the worldly atmosphere of the town and to rest with ever-increasing longing on the calm solitudes of the forest of Soignes whose borders had witnessed his boisterous childhood, in whose sweet-scented lanes his mystical experience had occurred. He answered the call and leaving behind the rumours and agitation of Bruxelles retired to Groeneudeal, " the green vale." There in the depth of that solitude teeming with innumerable lives, in the midst of those formidable old oaks pointing upwards the quivering extremities of their mighty limbs, in the green of the glades, in tune with the wailing or solemn voice of the breeze playing or storming through the bows his soul cast away the

last worldly concerns. Even the smiling mild spirit of polemic fell away from his soaring mind shaken off by the hymn of praise and love which burst forth from his ecstatic soul and there in the hollow of a venerable lime-tree were written those gems of poetic mysticism, where in a description recalling the best traditions of neo-Platonism, he says : "Contemplation places us in a purity and a radiance which is far above our understanding and none can attain to it by knowledge, by subtlety, or by any exercise : but he whom God choses to unite to Himself, and to illumine by Himself, he and no other can contemplate God. But few men attain to this divine contemplation, because of our incapacity and of the hiddenness of that light wherein alone we can contemplate. And this is why none by his own knowledge, or by subtle examination, will ever really understand these things. For all worlds and all that one can learn or understand according to the mode of the creatures, are foreign to the truth that I have seen and far below it. But he who is united to God, and illumined by this Truth—he can understand Truth by Truth" and again : "The top of the ladder is reached when, beyond all knowledge and understanding, we discover in ourselves an enlightened ignorance, when passing beyond every name bestowed upon God or creatures, we die to lose ourselves in an eternal namelessness ; when beyond all virtue we discover in us an endless rest, and beyond the blessed spirits, an immense bliss, in which we are one, that one which is the essence of that very bliss"

How far we are from the 21 propositions of Meister Eickhart and his speculative rationalism or the syllogising scholasticism of Erigena.

But the mystic is not concerned with the philosophy of religion. He does not follow the path of collective religiosity. He bursts beyond the sacred limitation of the transcendental and the irresistible clan of his feelings brings him to the Goal. And the inspiration which comes from his intoxicated enthusiasm is the basis on which both the feeble understanding of the crowds and the fearless heart of kindred souls find their standing in the problem of religious life.

Thus the blazing light of Ruysbroeck's enthusiasm put a temporary refrain on the surging irreligiosity of his contemporaries and through his disciple Gerard Groot, founder of the Brotherhood of the Common Life, his spirit influenced in the next generation the very different character of another great mystic : Thomas a Kempis.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Hindu-Muslim Unity.

A TRINITY OF IDEALS.

“Unity before everything else.” In giving expression to these words, the saintly statesman of India has struck at the very root of the question. Furthermore, with rare insight he has marked out a path for the achievement of unity. His programme is simple and self-sufficient ; simple, in so far as its significance could be grasped by the mass of the people ; self-sufficient, because it contains all the elements necessary for national solidarity. Hindu-Muslim unity, non-violence, and the removal of untouchability, these are the three planks upon which Mahatma Gandhi wants the people of this country to associate for the achievement of responsible government. These principles, if followed closely, have the power to give something infinitely more than civic and national freedom, the freedom of the soul. And again, these principles are so interdependent that realisation of one means the realisation of the other two and the realisation of all means the attainment of the national goal. Hindu-Muslim unity could only be achieved through non-violence and the removal of untouchability. True non-violence is not possible without Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability. Untouchability, again, would cease to be a stain on Hindu social *dharma*, when the Hindus non-violent in thought, word, and deed extend a hand of fellowship to the communities outside the pale of Hindu society. So we see that these three principles stand as a trinity of ideals, as the three sides of the triangle of national self-realisation.

NATIONAL SELF-REALISATION.

To arrive at a clear conception of the meaning of national self-realisation, it is necessary to understand the two-fold aspect of national life. Man's life on earth is not a mere preparation for the joys of a *post-mortem* existence, however great these joys may be. Life on earth is a reality. Those fanatics who in the sacred name of religion attempt to disturb the foundations of national life are false prophets who lead their flock astray to the pit-falls of national degradation and utter destruction. The claims of the spirit are not to be subordinated to the claims of the world ; but happily in God's world a well-ordered national life gives room for the complete realisation of the social as well as the super-social ideal. The Scriptures of all the great religions of the world take into consideration this two-fold ideal and also point out that the realisation of the social ideal is a necessary step towards the realisation of the super-social ideal. Spiritual truths are eternal and permanent, the broad principles upon which social life is built are also eternal and permanent but the detailed directions for the guidance of social life change with change of circumstances. The true leader is he who closely observes facts and formulates a scheme of life which, while being in full conformity with the principles of religion, takes into consideration the altered circumstances. Such a leader should necessarily have very wide sympathies and a broad culture.

India is fortunate in having a great leader of the true type. Shame upon the sons of India, if they do not pay heed to his words and come together for the achievement of their common object. What is it that stands in the way of freer social intercourse between the Hindus and the Muslims ? The conventional don't-touchisms created by ignorant priests need not stand in the way of our following the dictates of common-sense. We have to face facts and admit that priests as a body

can never be leaders, for they often try to hedge themselves within barriers. History tells us that wherever the priestly power was paramount, there was narrow-mindedness and bigotry and decay of national life. Happily for us, Hindus and Muslims, we do not recognise the Pandits and Moulvies as keepers of our conscience ; we do not require any intermediary to stand between our God and ourselves ; nor are we going to add one more shackle to our already existing bondages by creating something of the nature of a church government. The path to our progress towards national self-realisation is free enough, if we could only rise above petty prejudices and meaningless superstitions.

THE PATH TO THE ATTAINMENT OF UNITY

Unity, harmony, friendship and brotherhood would remain mere words, if we do not proceed further than intellectual conviction. How long would a professed friendship stand, if it is not followed by actions which give expression to the feeling of friendship. Brotherhood is not a mere transcendental abstraction ; it is something real and is created and maintained by acts of self-sacrifice which throw all conventions to the wind. If we boldly face the problem, we shall find that the path to the attainment of unity lies through a conscious breaking of all conventional barriers which now separate the two communities. A new attitude of mind has to be slowly evolved. There should be freer social intercourse ; in their joys and sorrows Hindu families should invite Muslim friends to come and participate. The wedding-feast given in that joyful occasion when a couple of young people are joined together to form a new social unit was conceived by the law-givers of the world to strengthen social ties and to introduce the new couple into society. In the past, people whose dealings were limited within the narrow confines of a caste were content to rest satisfied with introducing the new couple

to persons of their own caste. The thinking men and women of to-day are endeavouring towards a wider life, a broader national consciousness, which by its very nature rises above petty clannishness. The young people of to-day when they are joined in holy matrimony should have the blessings of a wider circle of friends ; for in their future life they stand in need of the active help and co-operation of friends belonging to different communities. We can make the wedding-feast an occasion for freer social intercourse. In Hyderabad there seems to be an old saying, " One son-in-law a Raja and another son-in-law a Nawab. " The saying is of course founded upon the fact that among noble families there were no scruples as regards inter-communal marriages. We are not, of course, advocating that friendly families of the two communities should go so far as that, what is wanted is that the bonds of friendship should be tightened by a closer coming together. The blessings of a saintly Muslim and the good wishes of a sincere Muslim friend are quite as effective as any other blessings and good wishes. Again the women-folk of the two communities should endeavour to understand each other. A Hindu and a Muslim gentleman are friends, let us say ; it is in the proper order of things that their wives should get to know each other and meet each other frequently. The friendship between the two gentlemen would in this way become a friendship between the two houses. It would be a more lasting friendship. As regards food there is no reason why a Hindu should have any scruples in participating in pure hygienic food prepared in the kitchen of a Muslim friend. If inherited prejudice stands in the way then the beautiful *mantram* beginning with "*Brahmarpanam*" may be pronounced and the food may then be taken without any scruple. We are not advocating violent methods and asking the strictly orthodox to break away from their usual habits all of a sudden. Where there is a will there is a way ; earning the love and friendship of a

good man is quite as sanctifying as consecrated food. An act which promotes peace and goodwill can never be an unholy act.

OBSTACLES ON THE WAY

As we have already pointed out in the beginning the chief obstacle which stands in the way of achieving unity is the want of the spirit of *ahimsa*. Viewed in its positive aspect this term means just the same thing as chivalry. Non-violence does not include all that is meant by the word *ahimsa*. The valiant *Kshattriya* who takes the vow of laying down his life, if need be, for the protection of women and children, of never taking arms against a weak adversary, of accepting the challenge of an equal or stronger opponent is as much full of the spirit of *ahimsa* as the holy *Brahmana* who takes the vow of voluntary poverty, of non-injury by thought, word or deed, of renouncing life and all its pleasures for the service of humanity. The *Kshattriya* form of *ahimsa* is suitable for the householder ; and the *Brahmana* form for the ascetic. The spirit of *ahimsa* should be sought for and not the mere outward form of it. Paradoxical though it may seem, the most effective way of promoting the spirit of *ahimsa* would be the popularising of some art of self-defence. Boxing tournaments and other athletic sports may form a definite feature of the December conferences. When one hears of the unseemly quarrels that break out now and then between the two communities one is pained more at the moral degradation displayed during the course of the quarrel than at the number of heads broken as a result of it. Fighting is a *Kshattriya's* game, they who indulge in it should like true *Kshattriyas* know the rules of the game and abide by them. Then fighting would indeed ennoble the victor as well as the vanquished. Brave men seldom quarrel, they who know the rules of the game of fighting will

never enter into an ignoble fracas. The valiant *Kshatriyas* of our epics, Sri Ramachandra, Bhishma, Yudhis-thra and others, were they not great fighters and were they not filled with the true spirit of *ahimsa*? Who will deny that they were not. So we see that the spirit of *ahimsa* can never be achieved by smothering and suppressing the fighting spirit but by educating and disciplining it. A pugilist knows that it is disadvantageous for him to lose his temper; he learns to keep himself cool and steady. A disciplined body tends to produce a disciplined mind and a man who has his body and mind under control is not easily excited to deeds of violence. Of course, there is the other way of disciplining the body by starting with the discipline of the mind; this is the path elaborated in the ancient institution of *Brahmacharya*, but it is not every one who can lead a life of complete celibacy. The chief thing to remember is that the spirit of *ahimsa* does not immediately descend upon a person, the moment he gives assent to the creed of non-violence. As many other desirable things in life it can only be obtained by working for it. We have already shown that *ahimsa* is impossible unless the body and mind are disciplined and brought under perfect control. Mutual help and service to the poor and the distressed are active means of developing in the mind the spirit of *ahimsa*. If we, Hindus and Muslims unite together and organise ourselves for uplifting the depressed classes, the so-called untouchables, the blessings of God will be upon us and we would have attained the true spirit of *ahimsa* and the goal of all our endeavour. The Hindus particularly the cultured and enlightened among them should devise ways and means of consolidating Hindu society. Fratricidal strife conduces to no good either in this world or in the next.

THE TRUE SPIRIT OF TOLERATION

Hinduism teaches toleration and clearly says that there is more than one way of reaching the goal. Conversion is against the spirit of toleration ; by this we do not mean that the Hindus should not admit into their fold, those who are voluntarily seeking to enter into it. As our forefathers did, we Hindus of the present day should not only practise absolute toleration in matters of religion but should also learn to love the best in other religions. Muslim culture is an education in itself. Islam has played a great part in civilising the western world ; Hindu as well as Muslim youths should search for and make their own those moral forces which made Islam such a great civilising factor. The intellectual and spiritual treasures gathered by ancient Hindu savants is as much the heritage of the Muslims as of the Hindus. From time immemorial the Hindus gave a home to all who sought for it in this blessed land of *Bharathavarsha* and freely shared with them their knowledge and their worldly goods. Our great saints and sages rose so much above sectarianism that they inspired love and reverence in the hearts of all. A few days ago, the writer was present at a lecture delivered by a distinguished Moham-medan missionary. In the course of the speech the lecturer spoke so feelingly of the great Swami Vivekananda, the wealth of love which the Swami showered on all who came around him and gave such touching personal reminiscences that some of the audience were visibly moved. Great souls like Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi teach us how to love ; shall we not follow their footsteps and learn to love each other, so that we may live a fuller and a nobler life.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

SHORTER NOTICES.

We have pleasure in welcoming "Ananda Chandrika" an illustrated monthly journal, published at Hosur in the Salem District. The opening issue contains well-written lives of Sri Chaitanya, the great saint of Bengal and Sri Thyagarajah, the well-known musician of South India. We hope that future issues of the journal will maintain the promise of the opening issue. The annual subscription is Rs. 3.

A. S.

The Spinal Bath, by Mr. Lakshman. The Nandi Publishing House, Pondicherry. Price As. 4.

Those who are familiar with the system of curative baths of which Louis Kuhne was the originator, can have no difficulty in understanding the method of spinal bath, a new tonic and curative bath of which Mr. Lakshman is the originator. He is a follower of Louis Kuhne, but while the author's methods are in spirit the same as Louis Kuhne's the form is different. It is claimed that the spinal bath of Mr. Lakshman combines the virtues of both the cooling baths of Louis Kuhne and also those of the natural bath advocated by Adolp Just, the author of "Return to Nature."

A. S.

Thoughts from the Vedanta, by R. Krishnaswami Aiyar, M.A., B. L. (Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam).

The Vedantic system of thought is too vast a subject to be compressed within the short compass of a popular hand-book. The author has, we think, successfully attempted to present the basic principles of the Vedanta philosophy in simple language. There is a large class of people at the present day and their number is growing who evince a genuine desire to acquaint themselves with the main philosophical aspects of the Vedanta but who are handicapped by not being able to pursue the study in the original Sanskrit works. These will find the present volume quite handy and reliable.

A. S.

The Great Teachers of the World Series—Sri Sankaracharya, by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, Sub-Judge. (The Vasanta Book Depot, 78, Coral Merchant Street, Madras).

The originators of this wonderful series of booklets on the great teachers of the world have to be congratulated on having been able to get a scholar of the high attainments of Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri to present in a short compass of about fifty pages, a critical account of the life and teachings of Sri Sankaracharya who has given to the world a marvellous doctrine "which is at once the revelation, the summation and the transfiguration of all the faiths and philosophies of the world." Students of the Advaita philosophy of which Sri

Sankaracharya was the greatest exponent will find the little book a necessary preparatory ground for the further study of the subject.

A. S.

Diet, Righteousness, by Lakshman. (The Hanuman Printing Works, Villupuram. Price As. 10).

In a pamphlet of 68 pages, the author seeks to explain what he considers is a rational method in eating which is also the natural method. "Our capacity for making the most of life, of exploiting all its possibilities, both in enjoyment and in achievement, is immensely multiplied by return to nature, especially in the matter of eating." Incidentally the author refers to fasting as the most effective curative measure known to the Hindus. The book also contains several useful hints on diet, work and rest.

A. S.

Current Thought (Vol. I. No. 1). (Published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras, S. E.).

We have much pleasure in welcoming to the ranks of Indian Journalism, *Current Thought* published by Mr. S. Ganesan, Triplicane. It is stated that the aim of the promoters is to focus attention on the present tendencies in world-thought which have become indifferent especially after the Great War, and to enable its readers to be in touch with the best and the latest products of the human mind. As may be expected *Current Thought* will be non-political. The opening number keeps up the promise of the promoters. The place of honour is given to a thought-provoking paper by Mr. C. F. Andrews on the future of humanity besides other articles of note by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Bernard Shaw. We wish our young contemporary every success.

A. S.

Thoughts of the Great, by G. S. Arundale. (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. 1924).

Dr. G. S. Arundale has for a long time been gathering great thoughts wherever he could find them, and has now put them together in a compact volume of a little over two hundred pages the first series of the thoughts. As he himself says, he has done so to remind us that "We can make our lives sublime," and has dedicated his little volume quite appropriately to the young in heart—the truly great—of all nations, of all races, of all ages, in the hope that the world through them may realize its brotherhood. The thoughts are collected from a variety of sources—ancient and modern, from the *Rig Veda* to the great writers of the present century, from writers dead and living of all countries. To brood over the thoughts of the great and meditate upon them and the mental satisfaction which one feels in being thus constantly in the company of the great is indeed a privilege and a blessing. We hope that Dr. Arundale will give us the second series soon.

A. S.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedānta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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WOMEN OF INDIA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(Continued from page 212)

NOW comes another peculiar Indian institution. I have just told you that in the first two or three castes the widows are not allowed to marry. They cannot even if they would. Of course, it is a hardship on many. There is no denying that not all the widows like it very much, because non-marrying entails upon them the life of a student. That is to say, a student must not eat meat or fish, nor drink wine, nor dress except in white clothes, and so on ; there are many regulations. We are a nation of monks—always making penance, and we like it. Now, you see, a woman never drinks wine or eats meat. It was a hardship on us when we were students, but not on the girls. Our women would feel degraded at the idea of eating meat. Men eat meat sometimes in some castes ; women never. Still, not being allowed to marry must be a hardship to many ; I am sure of that.

But we must go back to the idea ; they are intensely socialistic. In the higher castes of every country you will

find the statistics show that the number of women is always much larger than the number of men. Why? Because in the higher castes, for generation after generation, the women lead an easy life. They "neither toil nor spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them." And the poor boys, they die like flies. The girl has a cat's nine lives, they say in India. You will read in the statistics that they outnumber the boys in a very short time, except now when they are taking to work quite as hard as the boys. The number of girls in the higher castes is much larger than in the lower. Conditions are quite opposite in the lower castes. There they all work hard; women a little harder, sometimes, because they have to do the domestic work. But, mind you, I never would have thought of that, but one of your American travellers, Mark Twain, writes this about India: "In spite of all that Western critics have said of Hindu customs, I never saw a woman harnessed to a plow with a cow or to a cart with a dog, as is done in some European countries. I saw no woman or girl at work in the fields in India. On both sides and ahead (of the railway train) brown-bodied naked men and boys are plowing in the fields. But not a woman. In these two hours I have not seen a woman or a girl working in the fields." In India even the lowest caste never does any hard work. They generally have an easy lot compared to the same class in other nations; and as to plowing, they never do it.

Now, there you are. Among the lower classes, the number of men is larger than the number of women; and what would you naturally expect? A woman gets more chances of marriage, the number of men being larger.

Relative to such questions as to widows not marrying: among the first two castes, the number of women is disproportionately large, and here is a dilemma. Either you have a non-marriageable widow problem and misery, or the non-husband-getting young lady problem. To face

the widow problem, or the old maid problem ! There you are ; either of the two. Now, go back again to the idea that the Indian mind is socialistic. It says, " Now, look here: we take the widow problem as the lesser one." Why ? " Because they have had their chance ; they have been married. If they have lost their chance, at any rate they have been married. If they have lost their chance, at any rate they have had one. Sit down, be quiet, and consider these poor girls, they have not had one chance of marriage." Lord bless you ! I remember once in Oxford Street, it was after ten o'clock, and all those ladies coming there, hundreds and thousands of them shopping, and some man, an American, looks around and he says, " My, how many of them will ever get husbands, I wonder !" So the Indian mind said to the widows, " Well, you have had your chance, and now we are very, very sorry that such mishaps have come to you, but we cannot help it ; others are waiting."

Then, religion comes into the question ; the Hindu religion comes in as a comfort. For, mind you, our religion teaches that marriage is something bad, it is only for the weak. The very spiritual man or woman would not marry at all. So the religious women say, " Well, the Lord has given me a better chance. What is the use of marrying ? Thank God, worship God, what is the use of my loving man ?" Of course, all of them cannot put the mind on God. Some find it simply impossible. They have to suffer ; but the other poor people, they should not suffer for them. Now, I leave this to your judgment ; but that is their idea in India.

Next, we come to woman as daughter. The great difficulty in the Indian household is the daughter. The daughter and caste combined ruin the poor Hindu, because, you see, she must marry in the same caste and even inside the caste exactly in the same order, and so the poor man sometimes has to make himself a beggar to get his

daughter married. The father of the boy demanded a very high price for his son, and this poor man sometimes had to sell everything just to get a husband for his daughter. The great difficulty of the Hindu's life is the daughter. And, curiously enough the word daughter in Sanskrit is "duhita." The real derivation is that, in ancient times the daughter of the family was accustomed to milk the cows, and so the word "duhita" comes from "dooha," to milk ; and the word "daughter" really means a milkmaid. Later on, they found a new meaning to that word "duhita," the milkmaid ; she who milks away all the milk of the family. That is the second meaning.

These are the different relations held by our Indian women. As I have told you, the mother is the greatest in position, the wife is next, and the daughter comes after them. It is a most intricate and complicated series of graduation. No foreigner can understand it, even if he lives there for years. For instance, we have three forms of the personal pronoun ; they are a sort of verbs in our language. One is very respectful, one is middling and the lowest is just like *thou* and *thee*. The children and servants the last is addressed. The middling one is used with equals. You see, these are to be applied in all the intricate relations of life. For example, to my elder sister I always throughout my life, use the pronoun *apani*, but she never does in speaking to me ; she says *tumi* to me. She should not, even by mistake, say *apani* to me because that would mean a curse. Love, the love toward those that are superior, should always be expressed in that form of language. That is the custom. Similarly, I would never dare address my elder sister or elder brother, much less my mother or father, as *tu* or *tum* or *tumari*. As to calling our mother and father by name why we would never do that. Before I knew the custom of this country, I received such a shock when the son, in a very refined family, got up and called the mother by

However, I got used to that. That is the custom of the country. But with us, we never pronounce the name of our parents when they are present. It is always in the third person plural, even before them.

Thus we see the most complicated meshwork in the social life of our men and our women and in our degrees of relationship. We don't speak to our wives before our elders; it is only when we are alone or when inferiors are present. If I were married, I would speak to my wife before my younger sister, my nephews or nieces; but not before my elder sister or parents. I cannot talk to my sisters about their husbands at all. The idea is, we are a monastic race. The whole social organization has that one idea before it. Marriage is thought of as something impure, something lower. Therefore, the subject of love would never be talked of. I cannot read a novel before my sister, or my brothers or my mother, or even before others. I close the book.

Then again, eating and drinking is all in the same category. We do not eat before superiors. Our women never eat before men, except they be the children or inferiors. The wife would die rather than, as she says, "munch" before her husband. Sometimes, for instance, brothers and sisters may eat together; and if I and my sister are eating, and the husband comes to the door, my sister stops, and the poor husband flies out.

These are the customs peculiar to the country. A few of these I note in different countries also. As I never married myself, I am not perfect in all my knowledge about the wife. Mother, sisters—I know what they are; and other people's wives I saw; from that I gather what I have told you.

As to education and culture, it all depends upon the man. That is to say, where the men are highly cultured, there the women are; where the men are not, women are not. Now, from the oldest times, you know, the

primary education, according to the old Hindu custom, belongs to the village system. All the land from time immemorial was nationalized, as you say—belonged to the Government. There never is any private right in land. The revenue in India comes from the land, because every man holds so much land from the Government. This land is held in common by a community, it may be of five, ten, twenty, or a hundred families. They govern the whole of the land, pay a certain amount of revenue to the Government, maintain a physician, a village schoolmaster, and so on.

Those of you who have read Herbert Spencer remember what he calls the “monastery system” of education that was tried in Europe and which in some parts proved a success ; that is, there is one schoolmaster, which the village keeps. These primary schools are very rudimentary, because our methods are so simple. Each boy brings a little mat ; and his paper, to begin with, is palm leaves. Palm leaves first ; paper is too costly. Each boy spreads his little mat and sits upon it, brings out his inkstand and his books and begins to write. A little arithmetic, some Sanskrit grammar, a little of language and accounts, these are taught in the primary school.

A little book on ethics, taught by an old man, we learned by heart, and I remember one of the lessons :—

“ For the good of a village, a man ought
to give up his family ;
For the good of a country, he ought to
give up his village ;
For the good of humanity, he may give
up his country ;
For the good of the world, everything. ”

Such verses are there in the books. We get them by heart, and they are explained by teacher and pupil. These things we learn, both boys and girls together. Later on, the education differs. The old Sanskrit univer-

sities are mainly composed of boys. The girls very rarely went up to those universities ; but there are a few exceptions.

In these modern days there is a greater impetus towards higher education on the European lines, and the trend of opinion is strong towards women getting this higher education. Of course, there are some people in India who don't want it, but those who do want it carried the day. It is a strange fact that Oxford and Cambridge are closed to women to-day, so are Harvard and Yale ; but Calcutta University opened its doors to women more than twenty years ago. I remember that the year I graduated several girls came out and graduated—the same standard, the same course, the same in everything as the boys ; and they did very well indeed. And our religion does not prevent a woman being educated at all. In this way the girl should be educated ; even thus she should be trained ; and in the old books we find that the universities were equally resorted to by both girls and boys, but later the education of the whole nation was neglected. What can you expect under foreign rule ? The foreign conqueror is not there to do good to us ; he wants his money. I studied hard for twelve years and became a graduate of Calcutta University ; now I can scarcely make \$5.00 a month in my country. Would you believe it ? It is actually a fact. So these educational institutions for foreigners are simply to get a lot of useful, practical slaves for a little money—to turn out a host of clerks, postmasters, telegraph operators, and so on. There it is.

As a result, education for both boys and girls is neglected, entirely neglected. There are a great many things that should be done in that land ; but you must always remember, if you will kindly excuse me and permit me to use one of your own proverbs, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." Your foreign-born ladies are always crying over the hardships of the

Hindu woman, and never care for the hardships of the Hindu man. They are all weeping salt tears. But who are the little girls married to? Some one when told that they are all married to old men, asked, "And what do the young men do? What! are all the girls married to old men, only to old men?" We are born old--perhaps all the men there.

The ideal of the Indian race is freedom of the soul. This world is nothing. It is a vision, a dream. This life is one of many millions like it. The whole of this nature is *maya*, is phantasm, a pest house of phantasms. That is the philosophy. Babies smile at life and think it so beautiful and good, but in a few years they will have to revert to where they began. They began life crying, and they will leave it crying. Nations in the vigour of their youth think that they can do anything and everything: "We are the gods of the earth. We are the chosen people." They think that God Almighty has given them a charter to rule over all the world, to advance His plans, to do anything they like, to turn the world upside down. They have a charter to rob, murder, kill: God has given them this, and they do that because they are only babes. So empire after empire has arisen, glorious, resplendent, now vanished away--gone, nobody knows where: it may have been stupendous in its ruin.

As a drop of water upon a lotus leaf tumbles about and falls in a moment, even so is this mortal life. Everywhere we turn are ruins. Where the forest stands to-day was once the mighty empire with huge cities. That is the dominant idea, the tone, the colour of the Indian mind. We know you Western people have the youthful blood coursing through your veins. We know that nations like men have their day. Where is Greece? Where is Rome? Where that mighty Spaniard of the other day? Who knows through it all what becomes of India? Thus they are born and thus they die: they

rise and fall. The Hindu as a child knows of the Mogul invader whose cohorts no power on earth could stop, who has left in your language the terrible word "Tartar." The Hindu has learned his lesson. He does not want to prattle, like the babes of to-day. Western people, say what you have to say. This is your day. Onward, go on, babes ; have your prattle out. This is the day of the babes, to prattle. We have learned our lesson, and are quiet. You have a little wealth to-day and you look down upon us. Well, this is your day. Prattle, babes, prattle—this is the Hindu's attitude.

The Lord of Lords is not to be attained by much frothy speech. The Lord of Lords is not to be attained even by the powers of the intellect. He is not gained by much power of conquest. That man who knows the secret source of things and that everything else is evanescent, unto him He, the Lord, comes ; unto none else. India has learned her lesson through ages and ages of experience. She has turned her face towards Him. She has made many mistakes ; loads and loads of rubbish are heaped upon the race. Never mind ; what of that ? What is the clearing of rubbish, the cleaning of cities, and all that ? Does that give life ? Those that have fine institutions, they die. And what of institutions, these tin-plate Western institutions, made in five days and broken on the sixth ? One of these little handful nations cannot keep alive for two centuries together. And our institutions have stood the test of ages. Says the Hindu : " Yes, we have buried all the old nations of the earth and stand here to bury all the new races also, because our ideal is not this world, but the other. Just as your ideal is, so shall you be. If your ideal is mortal, if your ideal is of this earth, so shalt thou be. If your ideal is matter, matter shalt thou be. Behold ! our ideal is the Spirit. That alone exists. Nothing else exists, and like Him, we live forever. "

THE MYSTIC PATH*

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

AT the very outset, I must tell you that Vedanta **pro-**
pounds one principle, one Truth and admits
various methods to realise the same goal. And the
highest Truth is reached when we attain oneness, oneness
with the Universe, with the God of the universe. *Tattwa-*
masi—"Thou art That"; *Aham Brahmasmi*—"I am
Brahman"; "I and my Father are one"—this is how
the highest truth has been expressed by the sages and
saviours of the world.

This is not a matter of mere philosophy or theoretical speculation; for such has been the experience, the realisation, of all the great sages belonging to the different religions and creeds of the world. If you but read the lives of the Christian mystics, the Buddhist monks, the Mahomedan Sufis, or the Hindu sages, you will find that they all had ultimately attained the same realisation of oneness. We are all rushing towards that goal of unity, consciously or unconsciously. We may begin as dualists, we may have faith in a religion which teaches us that we are separate, eternally separate from God and that we are going to retain our separate individualities through out eternity; but the more we progress towards God, the more we realise the truth, the more we begin to feel our unity, nay, our very identity, with God. We cannot help it. None can help it. For the Truth must reveal itself to all sincere aspirants, whether they be dualists, or qualified monists, or monists. All have to come ultimately to that highest realisation where all duality, all relativity, ceases, where there is one Divine Spirit and that Divinity alone.

* A lecture delivered at the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, U. S. A.

It has been already mentioned that Vedanta recognises the truth that there must be various methods to realise the same goal, inasmuch as there are various types of men and women with diverse temperaments and characters. The Mystic Path is one of such methods to attain to the realisation of oneness.

In Sanskrit this path is known as Raja Yoga, or the king of all Yogas. It is said to be the king of all Yogas because it can be used with all the other Yogas and is suitable to almost all temperaments. It does not ask you to believe in any particular creed or dogma. You may have faith in one religion or other, or you may not have faith in any particular religion. It does not ask you to change your own creed or dogma. If you are a Christian, remain a Christian ; if you are a Hindu, remain a Hindu. You can remain in your own faith and at the same time follow these practices. And even if you have no faith in any religion, it does not matter. The chemist does not ask you to believe in anything beforehand. He has made certain experiments and he has found out the truth for himself. He will not simply ask you to believe in the truth he has arrived at, but he will take you to his laboratory and ask you to make the same experiments and find out the truth for yourself. Similarly, the mystic philosopher will ask you to make the experiments, to follow the practices and you will find out for yourself the truth taught by all the religions of the world.

This is also called the Mystic Path, because, as I go on describing the different steps, you will find that in the first place you have to practise regularly certain exercises, physical and mental, and you have to practise them in solitude, either in the solitude of a forest or in the solitude of your own room, where there will be nothing to disturb you, where you will be left alone with yourself and your thought.

But you must remember there is nothing secret or mysterious about this path. On the contrary, it tries to solve the so-called mysteries. Standing on the strong foundation of logic and reason, it tries to unravel the riddles of the universe and direct the individual souls towards higher and higher development, ultimately to make them realise the final truth taught by all the religions of the world. It does not merely give you hope of compensation for the sufferings of this world in some future birth somewhere in heaven or other spheres. On the contrary, it asks you to go beyond the sufferings and miseries of this world, even here and now. It seeks of you to realise the kingdom of heaven which is within even in the present life. If you cannot attain to the highest realisation and be free in this very life, you are at least sure to develop certain powers, gain purity of character and gather necessary experiences. And these will follow you and determine your next birth. You all know that our external possessions do not go with us to the grave. But the powers that we develop, the experiences that we gather, the purity of character that we form in this life, will determine our next birth; and we will be born with those powers and that character, beginning our effort anew from the point we had reached. And those faculties will give us the impetus towards higher spiritual development, ultimately taking us to the highest goal of freedom.

In the first place, this mystic path starts with the idea that all knowledge, all power, in short, the Divine Energy itself, is within, that it is within every individual in an unmanifested form. The ideal is to manifest this divine energy. In the language of the mystic philosophers, the Divine Energy remains coiled up. This is known technically as the *Kundalini*, or the coiled-up energy. The ideal is to release this power and manifest it.

Modern Science is gradually recognising the fact that infinite power and energy is within even a single electron. In a single electron there is the infinite energy stored up—this the modern science recognises, though not yet has it been able to demonstrate it. And science is trying hard to know the secret how to release and control this power. The external nature is the domain of science. Religion seeks to control the internal nature. And if we succeed in controlling the internal nature, we can also control the external nature. For, the external world is but the gross form of the internal or subtle nature. The finer is always the cause, the grosser is but the effect. So the external nature is the effect and the internal the cause. Similarly, the external forces are simply the grosser forms of which the internal forces are the finer. He who has discovered and learned how to manipulate the internal forces will get the whole of nature under his control. The Yogi proposes to himself no less a task than to master the whole universe, to control the whole of nature. He wants to arrive at the point where what we call "Nature's Laws," will have no influence over him, where he will be beyond them all. He will be the master of the whole of nature, internal and external.

Thus, according to the mystic philosophers, the ideal is the conquest of nature and the victory is achieved when the Divine Energy, the *Kundalini* (the Coiled-up) is released and manifested.

Let us now try to understand the psycho-physiological analysis as given by the mystic sages of India.

According to the mystics of India, there are two nerve currents in the spinal column, called *Ida* and *Pingala*, and a hollow canal, called *Sushumna*, running through the spinal cord. The spinal cord, as you all know, is formed in a peculiar manner. If we place the figure eight horizontally (oo), we see two parts, connected in the middle. If you add figure eight after

eight, horizontally, piled one on top of the other, that will represent the spinal cord. The left is the *Ida*, the right, *Pingala*, and the spinal cord is the *Sushumna*. The canal is closed at the lower end, and this part is situated near what is called the sacral plexus, which, according to modern physiology, is triangular in form. The Yogis describe as triangular in form that finer plexus, in which, using their mystical language, there is the Divine Energy, called the *Kundalini* (the coiled-up).

The Yogi conceives of seven centres, or, in the symbolic language, lotuses, in the *Sushumna*, the hollow canal that runs through the centre of the spinal cord*. Between the sacral plexus and the thoracic, there are three centres or lotuses, namely, *Muladhara*, *Swadhisthana* and *Manipura*. The fourth centre, *Anahata*, is called the lotus of the heart, and is situated near what is known in modern physiology as the thoracic nerve centre. The fifth is *Visuddha*, corresponding to the cervical vertebra, or the region of the neck. The sixth is *Ajna*, or the lotus between the skull and the first cervical vertebra; and the last is the *Sahasrara*, or the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain.

Now, the Yogis claim that every one has these spinal nerve centres or lotuses. But in most persons they are closed and 'face downward.'

When the *Kundalini* awakes, it tries to force a passage through the hollow canal, the *Sushumna*, and as it rises step by step, the closed lotuses turn their faces upwards and as they expand and raise their petals, as it were, layer after layer of the mind opens up and all the different visions and wonderful powers come to the Yogi. When it reaches *Sahasrara*, or the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain, the Yogi is perfectly detached from the body and mind; the soul finds itself free. Thus the

*The physiologists have not discovered as yet the purpose of this hollow canal.

Yogi alone has the *Sushumna* open. When the *Sushumna* opens and *Kundalini* rises, we go beyond the senses, our minds become super-sensuous, super-conscious—we pass beyond even the intellect to a state where reasoning cannot reach.

Ordinarily our mind functions within the three lower centres between the sacral plexus and the thoracic plexus ; and it expresses itself there in worldly thoughts and desires, in the display of beastly passions. When the *Kundalini* rises through the *Sushumna* to the lotus of the heart, there comes the vision of Spiritual Light and the life expresses love and sympathy for all. When it rises to the *Visuddha*, or the lotus of the throat, or ¹⁰⁰¹ communes with God, and then such a person always loves to talk about God and cannot bear worldly thoughts. As it rises to the lotus between the two eye-brows, the *Ajna chakra*, there comes the wonderful vision of the actual presence of God, and there arises an intense desire to become merged in Him ; and as a result of that supreme longing, the *Kundalini* rises to the thousand-petalled lotus and then the Yogi becomes one with the Absolute, becomes merged in the Absolute. The super-conscious vision, or the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, as it is called in the mystical language is attained.

Thus according to the mystics of India, the rousing of the *Kundalini* is the one and only way to attain Divine Wisdom, superconscious perception or realisation of the Spirit. The rousing may come in various ways—through devotion to God, through unselfish work, through the mercy of Great Teachers, or through the power of the analytical intellect of the philosopher.

(To be continued)

TOWARDS GODLINESS

AKSHOY KUMAR ROY

“**B**LESSED are the pure, for they shall see God” is a very significant saying of Jesus Christ, the incarnation of love and it is the essence of all religions too. Only in a pure body all that is divine and lovely rests and blossoms forth into celestial bliss. The purer we become, the nearer we approach our divine Father. The child has a heart of snow-white purity and it is for this reason that a reflection of Heaven can be found therein. But as the child begins to grow, he falls a prey to all contaminating influences of the world—a gradual change comes over him and he himself realises, how he goes farther and farther away from God. But if we really hanker after a religious life, we must be on the alert throughout our life and struggle heart and soul to maintain our heart pure. For, one’s religious life is based wholly upon that. From the practical point of view also, we find that a pure life affords a joy and bliss which is paralleled by no amount of worldly enjoyment. Pure life opens before our eyes the gate of Heaven and lifts us to a region wherefrom all the pleasures of the world seem like the enjoyment of a dog feasting upon putrid flesh and bones. Does self-indulgence give a joy, which can be compared with that of self-control? In some instances, bondage is much better than freedom. For what is freedom? Do we not very often give this fair name to our abject slavery to animal propensities and give a white-wash over our stinking weaknesses? Inward purity is more valuable than purity in outward things. We may be outwardly very clean—may be dressed in white robe and sit before the image of God in a posture of meditation—but if we are not inwardly pure, all will be useless—some evil propensity may rise within and torment us like prickly thorns underneath all public view. So Christ has truly said :—“Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth the man.” For if our food and drink are impure, they come out later on; but foul thought and evil passion once in, commit a lasting injury. So ablution and outward cleanliness do us no permanent good. Three baths in the Ganges or any river in the whole world help us little, if the heart is not

pure. Want of external cleanliness affect us to some extent, but inward impurity sucks up our life-blood and cuts us at the very root.

To become truly pure, one must be prepared for a strenuous struggle throughout the whole life—a regular fight with dark despair, dull misgivings and protean fear without cessation. Whatever one may say, man is more easily led to vice than to virtuous acts. It requires indomitable strength to overcome the terrible influence of our evil nature.

If we fancy for a moment what a tremendous struggle each great man had to undergo, in order to become pure in life, we become disillusioned and realise our folly to expect an easy victory. Sri Ramakrishna Deva, in his long-drawn struggle for holy life, would sometimes pray so very piteously out of the great anguish of heart, that even the neighbours would be moved to tears and could not help praying for him. If we, also, in our turn, can be madly eager for holy life—so much so that in that earnest hankering, all other thoughts will be completely lost, all other desires of life will vanish, tears will roll down our eyes, we are sure to gain the desired end. Even in this world of selfishness, we have, very often, an ample return of our love to friends, relatives, parents and kith and kin ; and then, why will not our sincere love and earnest prayer to all-merciful God meet with a sure response and reciprocation ? But the whole problem is, whether the faith we place in God is really sincere. It is sincerity, and earnestness which count most in this matter.

Some times, we are so much over-powered by the promptings of our animal nature, that some of us are led to doubt, if it is not a natural state of our mind. Foul thought and feelings, undesirable ideas and associations, come in the mind of every body, one moment or other ;—so they say, they are instinctive with human nature and very few make a determined effort to stifle them. Even the majority of the thinking class are of opinion that we can control the cravings of senses only through enjoyment and not by any external check. And it is also natural with them, always to pick holes with those who try to live a better life. But only those, who make an honest attempt to better themselves know the joys, and also the struggles and difficulties of such life, with which God tests the firmness of their mind. Whoever has made an honest attempt to elevate his moral nature even for a small period of time, knows how

difficult the task is, like up-hill climbing or walking over a sharp knife. Whenever we try to grapple with our passions and senses and to be free from their clutches, they unfurl their thousand hoods and assume a formidable look, which is sure to frighten many a chicken-hearted man. Yes, the life of a rebel is harder and more miserable than that of a slave, but nevertheless it is a life, which is conspicuously absent in one born and brought up in slavery. Those only, who have been tossed and moved in the fury of the mid-ocean waves can measure their dreadfulness ; but what value can be attached to the sneer of a man, who deafened by the very roaring of the sea, let the barge of his life sink in a dirty ditch ? Though the whole world may stand against, persons aspiring after a better life should remain strong and firm as a rock and struggle on until they attain perfect freedom born of the mastery of senses and passions. This is true heroism and real manliness. In this matter, our unflinching devotion to and firm faith in God should be the main source of our guiding strength and moving force. The greater the faith to God and our resignation to Him, the easier our task. The spirit of self-surrender and resignation dispels many spectres of false fears and unnecessary apprehensions of our life. Those who seat themselves in the place of God and try to achieve success independently are sure to struggle in vain against mountain-high waves. If we have firm faith in God, He will surely stand by us in times of stress and trouble, when the sea roars the loudest and the wind blows the highest, and say—"Storm be thou calm and the sea will be calmed." It is the indication of God Himself that if we try to be good, greater trials will await us, simply to make us stronger for the fight. If we can get through the ordeal, then only we can have perfect peace and rest. Every body suffers from the pricks of passions ; but, on the contrary, one should spring up at the least show of danger to fight them to a finish. It is quite natural that evil thoughts sometimes arise in our mind, but we must be careful that they do not make a permanent abode in our heart, with our acquiescence. In that case it will be practising falsehood. If you fight the foe when it faces you, it is not a sin ; but it is an unpardonable deceit to give the enemy quarter and make a compromise. You must search the heart through and through, to remove the last trace of insincerity therein and the rest you may leave with God.

A. K. Roy.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD*

A Study

PROF. S. K. YEGNANARAYANA AIYAR, M. A.

WE offer no apology for presenting the readers of *Vedanta Kesari* with a brief account of the very interesting book by Albert Schweitzer, who is a philosopher, doctor, musician, and above all a Christian missionary. His book called "Christianity and the Religions of the World" consists of lectures which he delivered at Birmingham in February 1922. Therein he attempts to contrast Christianity with Brahmanism and Buddhism, Hinduism and the Ethical Religions of China. He starts by saying that we cannot afford to ignore other religions in these days by merely condemning them by calling them heathenisms. He discusses the controversy about the origin of Christianity as deriving its best ideas from its contemporary Greek philosophy and religion, or through some distant Eastern cults, or that the so-called Christianity is not Christ's but a fabrication of St. Paul. He admits that though there might be points of similarity between Christianity on the one hand and Greek philosophy and Oriental cults on the other, yet there is a strong individuality about Christianity which differentiates it from other religions.

He warns his audience against interpreting Christianity in the light of modern utilitarian philosophy, as if Jesus was the President of some Social Service League and all his religion consisted in social amelioration. He strongly asserts that Christianity has nothing to do with this utilitarian philosophy and that when Jesus preached forgiveness under all conditions, he did not care to consider whether observance of such a commandment would make human society possible. He merely led us on to do the Will of God as he understood it.

He postulates three lines of distinction which determine the character of each religion :

1. Distinction between optimistic and pessimistic religions ;
3. Distinction between Monistic and Dualistic religions ; and

* "Christianity and the Religions of the World," by Albert Schweitzer.

3. The degree of emphasis placed upon ethical motives.

He summarises what he considers the teaching of Brahmanism or the philosophy of the Upanishads. Buddhism differing from it in its belief about the futility of all learned discussions and investigations about the nature of existence. It was satisfied with knowing that all that happens within the cycle of birth and death is suffering and that one thing that mattered was how to pass outside this cycle. The gospel of Jesus is different from these two religions in that it teaches humility contrasted with the arrogance of those who know, which we find characterising all Indian philosophers. It is not correct to say that Christ received instruction from an Eastern band of teachers known as Essenes as some Theosophists attempt to make out.

The Brahmins and the Buddha say to man :—" You should live in the world of pure spirituality as one who has died and to whom nothing in the natural world is of interest any more." Jesus tell him :—" You must become free from the world and from yourself in order to work in the world as an instrument of God. The Indian idea of Divinity is that it is pure Spiritual Essence ; it is an ocean into which man tired of swimming wishes to sink. The God of Jesus is living ethical Will desiring to give the individual will a new direction. Spirituality is not morality according to the Indian system but spirituality and morality are the same according to Christianity. There is this point, however, which stands to the credit of Indian religions as against Christianity, at least as represented by its Western followers. Modern Christianity is confined exclusively to activity. It lacks quietness and inward reflection.

He then compares Christianity with the religions of China, of Lao Tze and Confucius, shows its superiority over them and comes back to what he calls Hinduism, which is different according to him from Brahminism, because Hinduism attempts to satisfy the heart more than the ancient religions did. He describes Hinduism as " a Polytheism which carries within it a desire to become ethical Monotheism, but does not venture to take that decisive step. " This Hinduism according to him is a reaction against the stiffness and coldness of the old Brahminical religions, and he takes the Bhagavatgita as the gospel of this Hinduism. In every respect, he says, it is a religion of compromise. " Polytheism and Monotheism, Pan-

theism and Theism, Intellectual Mysticism and personal piety of the heart, Spiritual Religion and popular cults, all these it tries to unite without acknowledging the evident impossibility of their being so united. It lives on imperfect conceptions and halftruths. Therein lies its strength and weakness too."

The weakness of this religion according to him is its inability to become a definitely ethical religion because in the first place it would mean a break with polytheism and in the second place a break with the Brahminical Philosophy, which step it dares not take. He comes to the conclusion that Hinduism is not an ethical religion in the sense that Christianity is, because its highest teaching as given in the Gita comes only to this : Performing every action as something decreed by God, for God is the Power which works all in all. In this way Hinduism blurs the difference between good and evil. Christianity alone according to him is ethical, though, unlike the Eastern religions it is not complete and logical. He warns his audience, mostly missionaries who were being trained to go and preach the Gospel to the heathens, against the danger of preaching Christianity as a religion which explains everything. It does not explain the material world. On the other hand it deliberately discards the material world as being of less importance and cares only for the moral world. "If only I have Thee, I care nothing for heaven and earth." "All things work together for good to them that love God." These are the central teachings of Christianity, to which he would draw the attention of other people.

So far for the author's own presentation of his own religion in his own way. Though we do not agree with the author in many points, we have to admire the single minded devotion with which he has studied the subject and the directness and lucidity with which he presents his own views. A religion which satisfies the ethical craving of man alone might perhaps be acceptable to a few of that peculiar temperament. To say that the religion does not attempt to explain the world, that it has practically no consistent philosophy of its own, that is merely a dynamic force of ethical purity, is to confess its limitations. Man is neither pure intellect nor emotion, nor the will. He on the other hand, is a very complex entity in whom all these three combine in various permutations and combinations, and any religion which supplies his deep-rooted needs only in one department is bound to become unacceptable to the masses.

That alone can claim to be the universal religion that does not say : " Truth is this and this alone ; " but which says : " Truth is manifold though one." The universal religion must certainly satisfy the longings, intellectual and emotional and not merely ethical, and it is our humble opinion that Hinduism, as expounded in the Gita of which the so-called Brahminism of the author is merely the foundation rock, with the various 'paths for the individuals of different temperaments, known as the *paths of Action, of Knowledge, of Austerity and Love*, this Hindu religion alone has any chance of being accepted as the Universal religion.

S. K. Y.



NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Fetters of Hinduism

ADHIKARAVADA.

FROM the days of the Rig-Veda, there has been a quarrel between two contending schools of thought, each claiming supreme authority for its own side against the other. The *Mimamsakas* or the followers of the Karma-kanda of the Vedas interpret the true import of the *Shrutis* as Karma. They say Karma is creation. The glory of life lies in creation, in its infinite potentialities and this can be demonstrated only in terms of action. There is no other God but the action of man and that is why man should engage himself in action. It takes no cognizance of the universal reality apart from man. The attainment of Heavenly bliss through action is regarded as the final goal of man. Basing upon this theory, the recognition of plurality of life, the realisatic view of life, various classifications according to inherent power and possibility were formed. That is how the Varna-shrama Dharma system was developed. It is based upon Adikaravada and on the principle that one has to work out one's own destiny. Then there are other schools of thought, for example the Vedantic School which is specially followed by forest recluses called *Aranyakas*. Their doctrines are embodied in what are known as the Upanishads. They maintain that immortality is attained not by work, not by progeny, not by riches, but by Renunciation alone."

If man ever succeeds in realising the soul-quest of life that is infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss, the *Aranyakas* maintain, that this realisation cannot be attained by action, because anything born of action cannot be eternal in its nature. Infinite life lies in the realisation of the Self. One has to realise Brahman in one's own self. By realising the Purusha, which

is beyond all 'darkness,' one can transcend death. What is meant by death ? Death means change. By realising that which is changeless, infinite, beyond all the display of time, space and causation, we become immortal and this attainment of immortality should be our ideal. Although there have been followers of the ritualistic school from the very early days of the Vedas, it is the Vedantic school of the Vedas that was gaining ground on the popular mind and the entire religious views were being coloured by the vedantic thoughts. Before the advent of Buddha although the vedantic school of thought worked not a little in shaping the destiny of life Karma-kanda had a sovereign sway on the popular mind. It was Buddha who gave a decisive turn to the thought currents, and the followers of the ritualistic portion of the Vedas were worsted. In the 5th and 6th centuries with the advent of Kumarila Bhatta and Mundana Misra, there has been a kind of resuscitation of the Karma-kanda. But with the rise of Sankaracharya and the defeat of Mundana Misra, the Vedantic doctrines once more came to the forefront and it was Sankara that rejuvenated Hinduism. But there arose a kind of confusion between the social institution that were moulded in the pre-historic times by the *Mimamsakas* and those that the Hindus were struggling to establish after the Buddha.

HYPOCRISY UNDER GUISE OF ORTHODOXY.

The above mentioned confusion still persists in the shape of the present caste system. Today we find in our orthodox Hindu homes a great divergence between profession and practice.

Very few of us are acquainted with the inner significance of our Shastras. Because as they are all in Sanskrit, we have to depend upon the *Purohits* and the *Pandits* for the interpretation of these Shastras and we follow their interpretations blindly. That is why the orthodox Hindus of today lead a different life from what they pro-

fess to lead. There are Hindus who visit non-Hindu restaurants, but when they come home they change their clothes, put on a turban and caste marks, and appear in right orthodox fashion. This kind of double life is led by a great many Hindus of today. My *Vaisya* (tradesman) friend being a business man, no doubt is very orthodox. He rises in the early hours of the morning takes his bath and worships at the Temple but when he goes to his business, 'honesty is not possible' for him and he does not feel the least compunction to cut the throat of his brother, or starve him to death which amounts to the same thing. If we analyse our social life a little critically and in an unbiassed manner we shall find that ninety-nine and three-fourth per cent. of Hindus are leading this kind of double life, thus setting up a variance between profession and practice. We can understand our orthodox Hindu friends who are trying to lead the life according to the dictates of our Shastras. Such men are few and far between. Our conviction is that our orthodoxy has become a mere name for hypocrisy. Just listen to the Shastras, Manu and Parasara say that a Brahmana should not live under a Sudra King and if circumstances force him to do so, he must burn himself alive. We ask how many of our orthodox friends are prepared to do that. Let us not forget that the goal of life is fixed for all ages and that goal is the Realisation of the Infinite. Hinduism was never a religion of mere faith nor of conformity with certain doctrines or dogmas. Being and becoming and the realisation of Supreme Bliss in life, these are enjoined by true Hinduism. The realisation must express itself in our daily life, otherwise it is no religion. Keeping the ideal in view, sociologists in ancient India tried to experiment upon social institutions such as the Varnashrama system. These institutions were meant to help the individual to evolve from the lowest to the highest order of life. Four types of men were distinguished according to their inherent qualities and these were asked to go through particu-

lar kinds of self-discipline to evolve themselves to reach the highest. The *satvic* side of life was considered to be the best. Then again there were the four stages of individual evolution, viz., Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa the last stage was kept as an ideal for all religions, as the last goal of man, but all must wend their way to this goal from a particular position in the march of life. Hence the Varnashrama system was a kind of sociological experiment, but owing to various reasons, it was fossilised and the whole structure of our society went out of the way.

CLAMOUR FOR PRIVILEGE.

People somehow misunderstood the significance of these beautiful social institutions and on all sides we find the higher castes clamouring for privileges and the multitude gently smiling at their impudence, for in this age of democracy it is foolish for any aristocracy of birth to claim for privileges. A Brahmin, however fallen and wicked he may be, wants to claim the high place which society gave to its erstwhile spiritual leaders. This is going against the spirit of the caste system. Brahmanhood has almost entirely disappeared from the land. Kshatriyahood is also gone. And out of the four castes there remain only two, the Vaisya and the Sudra. In the midst of such degradation shall we quarrel for privileges? Therein lies the great defect of our modern orthodoxy, the divergence between profession and practice, between the external and the internal life. This divergence came into existence because of misunderstanding the spirit of the Shastras.

IN THE THRALDOM OF TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

Ignorance is the mother of all evils. Owing to this ignorance of the true import of our Shastras, we stick to customs and traditions, installing them on the pedestal of religion. And we hug them to our bosoms as if they were the real soul of religion.

There is *Drishtidosha*, for instance, a Brahmana should not accept food seen by a non-Brahmana. Then there is what is called *Pankthidosha* : a Brahmana and a Sudra should not sit together for meals. Similarly in various other trifling things, customs get the better of love and fraternity, the essence of true religion. On my way to Tibet, I noticed a curious custom followed by the Rajah of Ashkot. He belonged to the line of Agnikulas. It is a custom in that family that men cannot take food touched by their own women, those people strictly observe this custom thinking that it is religion.

In Malabar if a Chandala passes by the road and if his shadow perchance happens to fall on a Brahmana, the latter should bathe twenty times ; the Puliyas, the lowest type of Panchamas must stand at a distance of fifty yards from a Brahmana for fear of pollution. They sincerely believe that this is Hinduism. This is why Christian Missionaries are reaping a bumper harvest there.

That is how popular Hinduism exists to-day. Hinduism, as it is, is the observataion of certain customs and usages which have no sanction in the real religion. The orthodox Hindus have creaaated their own little holes and are content to lie in them. Although the inner life may be rotten, so long as one conforms to certain usages, he is called a Hindu. This kind of hypocrisy must have its baneful effects and those effects have shown themselves on our national life. We are not what we should be. If there is a constant variance between profession and practice, the conscience becomes blunt and it fails to give us the required vitality. It is the virtuous mind that developes character and force.

SACRIFICE, THE TRUE TEST OF RELIGION.

There are men in Christian and Mahomedan faiths who closely follow their tenets and sacrifice their all for a common cause. We are so faint-hearted that when

some small sacrifice is demanded of us we cannot do it. So the second fetter of real Hinduism, the real Sanathan Dharma is this blind attachment to certain popular customs in contradiction to the spirit of the Dharma.

From even the ancient times it is the Vedantic truths that are considered to be the highest goal of life and the society a machine, as it were, to help each other to reach the highest. To say that the Hindu religion which gives us such grand truths as,

“The knowers of the self look with an equal eye on a Brahmana, endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah” is at fault is sheer blasphemy.

GOD EVERYWHERE

Again, in the *Upanishad* it is said :—

“Whatever is subject to change in the universe should all be enveloped in the Self of the Lord, etc.”

What is the highest ideal of religion? To see God everywhere, to see *His manifestation* in everything.

Again, our religion teaches us :—

“The wise who perceive all objects as existent in the *Atman*, his own self, and the *Atman* in every being, for the matter of that he hates none.”

But we make no attempt to feel that. Though we worship Sri Krishna, though we instal Him in temples, we do not instal Him in our hearts. We try to follow our own whims and caprices. That is why we are suffering to-day. If we really want to rejuvenate our religion, we have to instal Sri Krishna in our hearts. Partha's Charioteer must be our charioteer. But we do not do that, we make money as the expedient of our life and hate each other.

THE SOVEREIGN AS THE GUARDIAN OF THE DHARMA

The other defect is want of any central body to guide the popular mind in matters religious.

In ancient days, when the nation used to live in villages, each village was self-sufficient and self-governing, the Rajah himself used to show the path of rectitude to the people. That is the reason why we see that whenever anyone wanted to introduce any reform in society, he used to catch hold of the Rajah and make him know his wish. Take for instance, the case of Buddha. He worked out his reforms through the kings. In Bengal great changes in social customs were created by the king. The king used to raise members of the lower castes to the higher caste. That great reformer Ramanujacharya, through the influence of the Rajas, raised certain members of the lower castes to the higher castes. Such changes used to happen through Rajahs. To-day that is not the case. The King belongs to a different religion and therefore it is natural and proper for the King not to interfere with the religious life of the Hindus. There is now no central body to guide and shape the popular mind and direct them on the lines of Hindu Dharma. That is why we see, that in different parts of India different communities are behaving differently, which causes inter-communal differences. The followers of Ramanujacharya sincerely believe that the followers of Shankaracharya are atheists and that they will not get salvation ! That is the reason why there are so many disintegrating forces. This is not the case with Christians and Mahomedans. Their religion helps them to unite. But the leaders of our different communities often attempt to create disunion by asking their respective followers to maintain an irreconcilable position. Then there is the pecuniary gain, the earthly gain for which these leaders hanker. The leaders of different communities often mislead the people into inter-communal disturbances and hatred.

THE LACK OF LEADERSHIP

The last but not the least is that the present leaders of our society, who command respect and who have some in-

fluence, do not care to lead a true religious life. The modern leaders of men think that religion is more or less a matter of conformity. That is the reason why they have not the spiritual insight that a leader ought to have in order to direct the members of the communities to the proper goal. In that respect Mahatma Gandhi is a great asset. It is he who showed to our countrymen that no one is really worthy to be called a leader who has not got the true spiritual insight and spiritual discipline. The masses will never respond to the call unless it comes from the spiritually-minded man. Our leaders seldom pay attention to the spiritual aspect of life. If we want to resuscitate and rehabilitate our ancient grandeur and protect ourselves against outside attacks, it is absolutely necessary to shake off our double life and hypocrisy. We must reform ourselves and make ourselves strong by developing our character. That is the first thing. The second is that the truths of our Shastras should be popularised. They are now in Sanskrit and many people do not get the benefit of them. The study of the Shastras must be done in accordance with the ancient customs along with a critical study, because, if we stick to the letter of the Shastras, we defeat their purpose. The fact is that we never follow what the Shastras really mean. Let us be critical and self-analytical in our religious life and try to bring it in conformity with the spirit of our Shastras as far as possible.

CONCLUSION

A group of teachers must be formed in India who should possess not only a critical knowledge of the western philosophy but also the devotion of the Rishis. Those pundits who possess the elements of ancient character and certain other virtues we cannot afford to lose. Our teachers must be men of spiritual insight and not mere scholars. The formation of such a group of teachers would only help us to rectify the defects and bring home to the people the real import of our ancient Shastras.

These teachers should not be mercenary. Their remuneration must be one of honour only. The man of knowledge and self-abnegation must be given the first rank. The man of power, *viz.*, the Kshatriya, the second rank and the Vaisya, the third, and so on. But in these days the man of wealth commands great respect. That should not be. The greatest respect must be accorded to the man of self-realisation. An organization has to be created which would lead the public opinion in matters religious and try to direct the usages of the different communities to the common goal. In this way all the different communities can be united. For that purpose social intercourse between different communities is absolutely necessary. Even between the communities there are so many sub-sections and following the policy of least resistance, a social intercourse between the different parts of India and between the members of the same caste is not prohibitive. If this kind of social intercourse is brought about, moral equilibrium can be regained.

In the name of orthodoxy, we are not really orthodox. In the name of Dharma we are leading a double life of hypocrisy. We are divorcing from our hearts the great God whom we worship only in temples and alienate ourselves from the real spirit of our ancient Rishis.

Let us take a bold stand and free ourselves from untruth and hypocrisy. May we all pray to God to help us to follow the true path of Dharma as Bhagwan Sri Krishna has shown us in the *Gita* !

OM !

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SAT !

COMMENT AND CRITICISM

Some years ago, the late Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyar, who had a true instinct for finding out what was good for his country, founded in collaboration with certain friends, the South Indian Association and the Ranade Library in Mylapore for carrying on research work in Indian History and Science. With the aid of Mr. Justice Ramesam as the Librarian and the active co-operation of eminent scholars, he brought together a rare collection of books, and established a quarterly Research Journal. The work of the Association as recorded in the pages of the Journal was regarded as of high value. The late Mr. Justice Sundara Aiyar endowed the Library with a permanent habitation. We do not know what has happened to the Association, the Library and the Journal. What the South Indian Association has attempted and failed to achieve, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Poona, founded in 1917, has been able to accomplish in an eminently satisfactory manner. The Institute whose annals for 1923-24, we have before us can lay claim to have made solid contribution in the fields of Indian History and Indian Philosophy and Religion. We are glad to note that under the auspices of the Institute a conference of orientalist in India, Burma and Ceylon will be held in this City in December next.

A League of Indian States :—One half of India is under the rule of Indian princes with independent or semi-independent control over the internal administration of their States, but all being subordinate to the Government of India. Sometime ago, a Chamber of Indian Princes was created with head-quarters at Delhi ; but it is merely a deliberative body, seeking to enforce its decisions by the influence of public opinion of a sort. While it serves as the channel through which the legitimate grievances of the general body of Indian Princes could be ventilated and enables the Government of India at the same time to ascertain and understand the view-points of the Indian States, it naturally falls short of an ideal organization which the Princes themselves hoped, the chamber would develop into. It is in no sense a League of Indian States, nor has it the written constitution to develop into one. And yet it can be made to develop under proper sanction into an effective organisation capable of performing for the Indian States individually and collectively what the League of nations has been attempting to do in the field of international politics among other things.

A. S.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SEVEN MYSTERIES, by Wayfarer. (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. Price Re. 1, Boards ; As. 12 Wrapper).

This book contains thoughtful essays on the mystery of pain, the mystery of beauty, the mystery of death, the mystery of life and form, the mystery of freedom, the mystery of silence and the mystery of union. The first three essays are reprints of the author's contributions to the *New India* newspaper. The author is evidently a mystic and endeavours to bring consolation to many a broken-hearted sufferer when he says that pain has its uses in the evolution of man, that death which is so much dreaded is a necessary and desirable process of the soul's growth. The last two chapters on the mystery of silence and on the mystery of union contain some of the best thoughts of the author. "In the silence God reveals Himself as part of us and is Himself the voice in the silence. In seeking silence we seek to hear that voice." We seem to recognise in this, a similar sentiment expressed by Swami Paramananda in his book *Creative Power of Silence* which we noticed in these columns some time ago.

A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, by Sri Aurabindo Ghose. (The Arya Publishing House, College Street Market, Calcutta).

These are introductory essays insisting on certain general principles of a sound system of teaching applicable to national education in any country and were first published in the *Karma Yogin* in 1909. As a thinker and writer of rare ability the author needs no introduction, and his views on the subject of national education should prove of great value in organising education in this country. The first problem in a national system of education is to make it comprehensive and thorough without the evils of strain and cramming. The teacher is not, as he unfortunately is now, a mere instructor or task-master, but a helper and a guide. He will not be required to impart as such mere knowledge to the pupil, but will show him how to acquire knowledge for himself. In order to do this, the mind of the pupil has to be consulted in its own growth. "Every child has in him something divine, something which is his own, and the task of the teacher is to find it," and the chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw that in itself which is best and render it perfect for a noble use. The education of the intellect divorced from the perfection of the moral and emotional nature is injurious to human progress. As in the education of the mind, so in the education of the heart, the best way is to put the child into the right road to his own perfection and

encourage him to follow it, watching, suggesting, helping. In this view, the old Indian system of the *Guru* commanding by his knowledge and sanctity the implicit obedience, perfect admiration, reverent emulation of the pupil, was a far superior method of moral discipline. It may not be possible in these days to restore the ancient system of the *Gurukula*, but it is not impossible to substitute the wise friend, guide and helper "for the hired instructor or the benevolent policeman which is all that the European system makes of the pedagogue." It is not merely by moral text-books that moral training can be given. The first rule of moral training is to suggest and invite, not command or impose, and the best method of suggestion is by personal example, daily conversation and the books read from day to day. The author contrasts the popular view that by merely teaching the dogmas of religion, children can be made pious and moral. Religion has to be *lived*, not learned as a creed. The essence of religion, to live for God, for country and for humanity, must be made the ideal in any scheme of national education. The day that national education is organised on these lines, will be the day of salvation for India.

KRISHNA—A STUDY IN THE THEORY OF AVATARS, by Bhagwan Das. (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Price Re. 1 Boards, As. 12 Wrapper).

This is a revised reprint of Babu Bhagwan Das' lecture given at the celebration of the *Janmashtami*, the Nativity of the Lord Sri Krishna, to the students of the Allahabad University. The Lord Sri Krishna has said in the immortal *Bhagavat Gita* that "When *Dharma*—righteousness, law—decays, when *Adharma*—unrighteousness, lawlessness—is exalted, then I Myself come forth ; for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil, for the establishing firmly of *Dharma*, I am born from age to age." So it is for the establishment of *Dharma* in the largest and truest sense, whenever the balance of human society is jeopardised excessively by selfish, ruthless, evil and cruel human beings, that the great *Avatars*, the great men of human history in the fullest sense appear. The author with a scholarship all his own expounds this theory of the *Avatars*. Referring to the Krishna Avatar in particular, the author has special sections dealing with Sri Krishna as a man of action and maker of history, as a man of emotion and devotion and dilates on the value for humanity of Sri Krishna worship in the *role* he played as a man of knowledge and wisdom and teacher.

A. S.

RECENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

THE WISDOM OF THE SERPENT.

From all times the serpent has been looked upon as the emblem of cunning. Serpent worship was one of the ancient and wide-spread forms of religious worship, and still finds a place among the rituals of such a highly civilized people as the Hindus, and savage races as the Negroes of the West Coast of Africa, and until recently among the Red Indians of North America.

What is this due to ? Is it due to the fear of the serpent on account of its deadly nature, or its cunning, or to the power of fascination which it is supposed to possess ? In the *Occult Review* for September, 1924, Mr. J. D. Leckie attempts to find an answer to these questions. The wisdom of the serpent is proverbial in Scriptural history. It is the first animal specially mentioned in the *Bible*, as subtle and wise, the word subtle being used in the sense of cunning. It is also referred to as the emblem of the devil, for it was the *role* of the Evil-one which the serpent played in the Garden of Eden which earned for it the appellation of "the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."

Human nature is always drawn towards the mysterious, and there is much that is mysterious surrounding the serpent and its life. There is a superstition among the Australian Bushmen, that any person bitten by a snake is subject to further attacks, although not necessarily from the same reptile, and that one snake bite is often followed by another from a different snake, possibly from the mate of the first offender. In Southern India also, there is a similar superstition prevalent but with a slight variation. A serpent which attacks a person should be killed and should not be allowed to escape with any punishment short of death, else it will manage to find the person and attack him however carefully he protects himself. Cases of fascination by snakes have been reported on the highest authority, and some have attributed this fascination to fear on the part of the victim. There can be no doubt that fear plays an important part in the process, and careful observers have recorded that a bird or a small animal, which comes within the range of a snake not only refuses to fly away, but actually creeps closer to the snake, though moaning or crying piteously the while, as though unable to control its movements. This suggests something of a hypnotic action, and it is stated that once the snake's eye is fastened on its victim it is apparently able to control its movements ; but if a person passes between the victim and the snake, so as to obscure the vision, even for

a moment, the spell is broken and the victim escapes. Other observers have staid that the coiling of the serpent appears to increase its magnetic force, for it generally coils itself up when fascinating small aniamls. There seems to be good reason to believe that an animal cannot be fascinated (hypnotised) unless it is taken unawares. If forewarned, it is fore-armed. And this explains the habit of the snake in lying motionless and half-concealed, generally close to some forest path, along which its prey is apt to pass. A snake so concealed can scarcely be distinguished from a fallen branch and will even allow itself to be trampled upon rather than get out of the way, for its instinct is to be motionless and so take its prey unawares. I am reminded in this connection of the passage in the daily prayer of the Hindus asking the snake to put out of the way and to go to a distance. This suggests something of the cunning and the fascination of the serpent and the desire of the devotee to avoid its hypnotic range. The subject is interesting and it is possible that more light may be thrown on it from Indian experiance, which is overful of serpent lore. It may be interesting to note that such lore is absent in countries where snakes are not numerous or are not of a very deadly nature, *e. g.*, England or Ireland where snakes are totally absent.

A S.

In the *Islamic Review* for August-September, 1924, the Editor, Mr. Khwaja Kamul-ud-din leads off with an informing paper on the fundamentals of Islamic religion and ethics as stated in the *Al Quran*, which laid down the doctrine that the glory of God lay in the edification of man. As the Prophet says "Do you love creator? Love your fellow being first." It was on this fundamental conception of religion and Ethics, Islam saw man's true religion in human nature and its develepoment, by following a course of disciplinary conduct known as the "five pillars of Islam" —faith, prayers, fasting, poor rates and piligrimage to Mecca. Food plays a prominent part in moulding the character of the individual, and such foods as injure the body, the mind and the soul are forbidden. Marriage is an institution which is necessary for the uplifting of humanity, by developing consciousness from stage to stage, from the love of family and love of tribe, from that to love of son and from the last named, to love of humanity. Islam holds out a noble conception of womanhood. "Women are men's twin-halves; God enjoins men to treat women well, for they are their mothers, daughters and aunts" and woman is equal to man both in moral and the ritual development. Compare the conception in Hinduism of God as Mother. Goodness to parents is gratitude for all that they did

for us when we were small. And after parents, we should do good to our kinsmen, the orphans, the needy, etc., out of love for Allah,, without asking for reward or thanks, nor taking pride or boasting. Who can deny that even in the short summary we have given of the main tenets of Islamic religion and morality, that they are not also the fundamentals of Hindu Religion and Ethics. A genuine desire on the part of both the great communities to understand these basic conceptions, should go a great way to produce that unity which will be to their lasting good and the good of humanity.

A. S.

Ancient Indian Polity :—The *Modern Review* for October, 1924, has an interesting paper by Mr. Ajit Kumar Sen on 'Ancient Indian Polity' with special reference to checks to tyranny. The checks which are contemplated by ancient Hindu writers and examples of which are to be found scattered in the various *Dharma Sastras*, *Artha Sastras*, *Puranas* and *Niti Sastras* and epics may be broadly classified under two heads, namely, preventive and retributive. The political preventive checks are king-made laws and customs, public opinion, ministers and assemblies. In ancient India, kings had very little legislative sovereignty. The strength of public opinion may be gauged by the dictum which Sukra lays down that a king should dismiss the officer who is discussed by one hundred men. Apart from this, it may be broadly stated that the real and the most effective preventive checks were the ministers and the assemblies. In the Vedic period, the assembly and the king were the two important elements that constituted the Government and of these the assembly possessed the greater political power as is evident from the various hymns of the *Atharva Veda* concerning banishment and restoration of kings. The Vedic monarchy was sometime elective and some-times hereditary. During the periods of inter-regnum due to death or banishment of kings, the assembly managed the affairs of the state. The place which the assembly held in the constitution in the Vedic period was less important in the Sutra period. With the increase of territory, the growth of the king's power and the rigidity of the caste system, the assembly gradually ceased to function and its place was taken by the ministry.

Referring to retributive checks, Mr. Ajit Kumar Sen states that during the Vedic period the assembly had power to degrade a king, and Manu has it that the king had to pay a heavy fine when he committed any offence against the state. The *Atmamedha* or *Prayopavesa* form of passive resistance—a vow of abstinence and death on the part of the people *en masse* till the removal of the cause of their grievance, seems to have been a very potent weapon in the hands of the oppressed people against their tyrannical rulers. Vedic scholars are of the opinion that the *Atmamedha* form of passive resistance was invented by the Vedic Rishis to check the licentious proceedings of some of their Asura kings. The whole article will amply repay perusal.

A.S.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The occasional reports that have been appearing in English and vernacular newspapers regarding the terrible flood in northern India cannot give our countrymen an adequate idea of the great disaster that has befallen to the lot of the unfortunate people living on the banks of the Ganges and Jumna. We are getting now and then startling reports of this calamity from men on the spot. Apart from loss of property, crops and cattle, the number of human lives lost in the flood is simply appalling.

The public can form some idea of the situation from the following reports we have received from one of the monks of our mission who has sent us a first-hand information of the great havoc.

Hrishikesh, Hardwar and Kankhal have suffered great but the suffering of Hrishikesh is beyond all description. The Ganges was flooded to an unprecedented extent. The hanging bridge known as Lachman Jhola has been washed off completely. Water flowed in high floods over the burra Jhari and chotta Jhari—the two small islands in the Ganges near Hrishikesh—carrying about two hundred of sadhu pilgrims. Only ten or twelve lives were saved. They took shelter on trees. Big trees were uprooted and taken away like straw. The thatched cottages of the sadhus tumbled down and there is no trace left, even of some pucca buildings and dharamsalas. The sacred Hrishikesh can hardly be recognised now after this great devastation. Five hundred cattle from Hrishikesh alone have perished. The sadhus who got up on the pucca buildings were carried off by the torrents and ultimately disappeared altogether. People on the bank stood as mute witness to this heart-rending scene. It was humanly impossible to render any help at that moment. Kankal and Hardwar shared the same fate of Hrishikesh, though not to the same extent.

Among other places of northern India that suffer from floods, Brindavan requires special mention. The city of temples was completely under the water of Jumna which rose 42 feet higher from its normal level. Our sevasram completely disappeared under water. With great difficulty the indoor patients were removed to a safe place. The workers stayed in the Ashrama premises to the last moment by climbing a high tree and at last had to go away in despair when the topmost boughs of the tree were going to be under water. The water has subsided now leaving behind in its trail great agony and suffering in the shape of diseases and scarcity. The price of food stuff is simply forbidding. The prospect of crops is entirely gloomy. The houses have been razed to the ground. People are roaming hither and thither without food and shelter and to aggravate the situation people are falling a prey to various diseases.

The Ramakrishna Mission organised works in Hrishikesh and Hardwar to ameliorate the woe of the people. The initial contribution has been sent from our provident fund. The fund is almost depleted

and it is impossible for us to cope with the situation by depending on it.

The immediate and crying need of Hrishikesh is the construction of about 150 huts for the shelter of the sadhus. The inhabitants of the place also require assistance in various shapes. We also intend to start immediate relief work in Brindavan and for this we must depend upon the generosity of philanthropic public. The gravity of the situation in Brindavan and Hrishikesh demands immediate organisations of relief works on a large scale. A very liberal contribution can alone supply us with the sinews of work. We appeal to the public to come forward and help us unstintedly in the relief work which cannot brook any further delay. Even a small contribution will, to a great extent, relieve the misery of our unfortunate countrymen. Contributions, however small, may be sent to the following addresses :—

1. THE PRESIDENT, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BELUR. HOWRAH.
2. THE SECRETARY, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION,
1, MUKHERJI LANE, BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA.

31—10—1924,

Belur, Howrah.

(Sd.) SARADANANDA.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASRAM, BRINDAVAN.

The seventeenth annual report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevasrama, Brindaban, for 1923, which we have just received is a record of useful work done for the relief of suffering humanity. The holy city of Brindaban attracts thousands of pilgrims every year and the Sevasrama has, in spite of inherent difficulties which institutions of the kind have to face, treated as many as 18,000 people without distinction of caste, creed or nationality. The institution depends entirely on public charity for its maintenance, but it is a matter for regret that from lack of adequate outside help, it has been labouring under financial stress, which will, it is feared, affect the usefulness of the institution if not its very existence. For the general up-keep of the Sevasrama in an efficient condition and to provide accomodation for the large number of patients resorting to the Asrama as well as for the workers themselves, pecuniary help is urgently required and we hope that the appeal of the President in this behalf will meet with generous response.

The Fifteenth Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Asram, Bharukati, Narayanpur, Barisal.

The Asram maintains a charitable dispensary. During the year under report, 43 patients were treated. Besides 55 persons were given help in the shape of diet and other necessities. The institution deserves all support from the public.

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 6/A, Banka Rai Street, Calcutta, for the year 1923.

The year under report is the record of a period of steady progress. The Students' Home is a College Students' Hostel licensed by the

Calcutta University and run on the lines of a Bramacharya Asram. It is specially intended for deserving indigent students, who get there everything they require, namely, food, lodging, fees, books, clothing, medical help, etc., during their College career. Here a spiritual, cultural and practical training is imparted to the boys by way of supplementing the academic education they receive from the University.

There is a provision for admitting also a small number of paying boarders who intend to receive this home-training. At the end of the year under review, there were twelve students in the Home, of whom eight were free and four paying boarders. The total receipts during the year amounted to Rs. 7,888-15-0 and total disbursements to Rs. 3,755-11-1. The balance at the end of the year, including the previous year's balance, was Rs. 6,980-15-9. The Home is in need of a permanent place of its own for which a building fund has been started. The Home appeals to the generous public to come forward to its help. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary of the Home.

The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Industrial School, Belur, Howrah.

Nearly three years ago, the authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission made a small beginning in the direction of giving technical and industrial education to the people, by opening an industrial school, which is now located in the Math compound. The students of the school are lodged and boarded in a rented building in the village close by the Math. The boys are taught weaving and a little carpentry besides having literary instruction of the usual type. In addition to free boarding and lodging, the boys are supplied with everything necessary for their comfort. If sufficient funds and facilities are forthcoming, the authorities of the Mission intend to extend the scope and utility of the school by adding classes for carpentry, cane-work and tailoring, etc. So far nearly a dozen boys have learnt weaving and gone back to their houses. At present there are nine students who are learning weaving and their normal literary education as well. The expenses of the school and the boarding-house are met by Musti Biksha, donations, subscriptions and free gift of yarn and cotton.

The institution stands in urgent need of (1) A permanent house for the school and the boarding ; (2) Funds for more looms, tailoring machine and carpentry instruments ; and, (3) Funds for the maintenance of the boarders. The institution appeals to all kind-hearted and charitable persons to contribute their mite towards this useful undertaking. Contributions, however small, would be thankfully received by the Superintendent, R. K. Mission Industrial School, Belur Math, Howrah.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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ISHWARA—AND THE NEED OF A MEDIATOR

K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR, M. A.

IN the Christian religion, not only is God regarded as inflicting punishment upon man—and “the moral relation between God and man is conceived in terms of criminal law”—so as to bring about a reformation and prevent further acts of disobedience to His commands, but God’s attitude to man is also always deemed to be one full of love and mercy and grace. Even while God judges and punishes, He does so only in the spirit which actuates a father when he punishes his son for disobedience as a means of getting him chastened and thereby helping to build up his character. If, in the latter case, this process of character-formation involves suffering for either father or son, it is a necessity of human nature and life. In the former case, God suffers, too, while he punishes, and, as Abelard points out, “The atonement (between God and man) is wrought by Christ’s love which draws out man’s love in return.” Man is a spirit even as God is, and so God can reveal himself as Christ-man so as the latter may perform a supreme act of loving sacrifice on the Cross and thereby

accomplish, in however mysterious a manner, the revelation of the Kingdom of God in man. When agnostics like the late Sir Leslie Stephen declare that "the conception of God as an almighty Chief Justice is too antiquated for serious discussion," they forget that the Christian or deistic conception of God as a Judge is intended only as a metaphor, and not to be taken literally. Christian theologians have not failed to realise that "punishment which is merely retributive is always non-moral or immoral; in the case of the Creator, it would be outrageous." But, when Christians aver that God's punishment of sin proceeds from a desire to produce a chastening and disciplining effect on the soul, it must be said that the analogy of God to the father is pushed too far. It has also been held, and rightly, as we conceive it, that in the Christian religion, God, finding that the laws, natural and spiritual, which are inseparably associated with the nature of man and his place in the universe are insufficient for the accomplishment of his aims in creation, has to interpose His own personality in the form of the incarnation of Christ for the reform and redemption of man. Those laws ought in themselves to be sufficient for efficiently dealing with and conclusively determining the relations of all human personalities towards each other and also towards God Himself. In reply, however, the question is asked,—“Why should not God lovingly assume the form of man and work for the latter's redemption?” Christian theologians and apologists have, in fact, often claimed that, when they speak of the need of an intercessor between God and man, in the form of Christ's Incarnation, this is exactly what they have in view. The Hindus, too, have their doctrine of *Avataras*, and the Vedanta seems to sanction it when the *Gita* declares that, whenever sin increases and virtue declines, God incarnates for the punishment of the wicked, the guarding of the righteous from being overwhelmed in ruin by their atrocities, and for the renewed proclama-

tion of the eternal laws of righteousness which have lost their vogue and hold on the minds of men. But they steer clear of the Western idea that, either in His divine or human form (as incarnation), God has (or can have) any suffering,—either that which arises from His (supposed) grief at the thoughtlessness and perversity of the sinner, or which is due to His taking, as in the case of Jesus, on his own shoulders, the burden of man's sin in order to secure the latter's redemption.

The doctrine of vicarious transfer (though different from the Christian in essentials) is not unknown to Hinduism. For, the South Indian School of Vaishnavism holds what is known as the doctrine of *Nyasa* or *Nikshepa* as the essence of *Prapatti* (not *Bhakti*). The doctrine, however, is freed from the specialities considered essential in Christianity. In the first place, there is no single intercessor for all mankind. God alone can be the universal mediator, and no responsibility can be assigned to God or imposed on Him for man's redemption. For, as the Supreme Lord of the universe, He need neither have, nor take, any of the responsibility attaching to man, especially when the latter has the capacity and will of repentance and reform as an endowment and characteristic of His mixed nature. In the second place, the repentant human soul is required to feel the (preliminary) assurance that God will grant him the redemption he seeks. Another preliminary condition is that he must resolve—and proclaim his resolve—never again to violate God's commandments as resolved in the Sastras, feel compassion for all creatures, and avoid everything likely to be an impediment to the continuance of his act of self-surrender and unconditional reliance on God's supreme mercy as the only source of his redemption from the misery of the bondage of rebirths. In the third place, the responsibility accepted by the Guru ceases the moment he conveys to God the repentant *Jiva's* desire for redemption and God, in His unbounded mercy,

has accepted the latter as his devotee and dependant (*dasa*). God also unfailingly accepts intercession in the case of one and all. For, the Vaishnava does not, like the Christian, hold that the *Jiva's* sin and fall make him incapable of entering into communion with God. The *Jiva* never loses his capacity for repentance. According to the *Gita*, repentance rapidly acts to make him again righteous, and thereby renders him worthy of his intercessor's helpful intervention and his acceptance by God as a matter of course. In the fourth place, the doctrine put into the mouth of Jesus that he is "forsaken" by God while voluntarily (or involuntarily) suffering for others seems,—to a rationalistic mind at least,—both inconsistent in Jesus and unworthy of the being and characteristics of the Supreme. For, Christ has entered on his mission with the consent and approval of God; and, further, God can never "forsake" any one, and much less His divine representative and incarnation on earth. In the fifth place, we must not forget that, when the *Nyasa* or *Nikshepa* (the placing of the burden and responsibility for redemption) takes place and the *Acharya* takes on himself the task of an intercessor with God, the *Jiva* is at once, by his very act of repentance and solicitude for his soul's future, transformed into a righteous person,—into a "*Dharmatma*"—and attains to "peace," as the result of God's acceptance of him and his gracious act of redemption (*Gita*, IX, 30, 31).

In the Christian doctrine, one of the chief difficulties arises, (a) from the fact that the burden of sin is conceived in a rather too material sense, *i. e.*, as something *weighing* on the sinner and requiring to be removed and placed on Christ's shoulders in order to help the former's deliverance; and (b) from the idea that Christ himself underwent sufferings of an inconceivable kind and amount from the transfer of the load of sin to his own shoulders and personality; and (c) that the incarnating body and person of Jesus is no longer available to us for

our present redemption by reason of His Ascension to Heaven when His mission to earth had been fulfilled. Christ's physical death and physical resurrection are regarded as the most insuperable of all difficulties and accepted in many quarters as mysteries not comprehensible by the limited understandings of men. It is easy enough to argue or accept the idea that service may involve sacrifice, and sacrifice, in its extreme limit and form, may involve death, as in the case of the late Father Damien, who sacrificed his life and became a martyr in the service of the lepers of Fiji islands. When, however, we once accept the fact of Christ's divinity as an Incarnation, the fact of death, especially when it is conceived as a judgment inflicted by a human judge over one brought up before his tribunal, presents difficulties which human reason cannot easily overcome ;—and so we must once for all resolve to accept them as incomprehensible and insoluble mysteries which are matters of pure faith and not at all capable of being reasoned about and made clear to the understanding. Sometimes, the mystery is solved by the contention that, though the physical body of Christ's original incarnation is no longer available, He still lives, like God Himself, in every human being in such a manner that personal intercourse is possible between the two in such a manner as to elevate and purify the human spirit. If the process of personal intercourse between the spirit of man and the spirit of Christ is now possible as a means of the former's redemption, the question arises,—“Where was the necessity of His physical Incarnation and death on the Cross originally for this same purpose ?” For, His coming had none of the larger aims which the *Gita* assigns to our divine *Avataras*, and He only came once for all and never again ; nor is His presence and intervention understood as needed again. If it is argued that only the unredeemed of *to-day* require or gain the inward personal enlightenment and that this enlightenment is conveyed by the communication

of grace and mercy alone without the need of a physical incarnation, how can we avoid the inquiry why the same should not have formerly been equally sufficient and efficacious ? The Incarnation of Jesus, when it did happen, would then lose its character of indispensableness, and this requires explanation. Further, as God, Christ, and man are, in a dualistic system like Christianity, different entities, how can they exist and have their sphere of operation in the same physical centre, whether mind or body, without a conflict happening, unless it is held that they have only identical aims,—a supposition which is clearly untenable, at least in regard to man ? Lastly, we have the difficulty, often felt even by faithful Christians, that redemption, as originally conceived, has the form of a transaction (or bargain) between God and His Eternal and Divine Son, that the claims which God makes in order to compass man's redemption can only be made good by Christ's physical sacrifice and death,—a procedure which ignores the spirit of man and the possibilities of spiritual and moral development stored in it and awaiting the inspiration of a true *Guru* graciously seeking to free him from all the infecting and incriminating contacts of the flesh. Again, metaphors like those implied in the doctrine that "Death is the wages of sin" or that birth and death are diseases which can be got rid of by the curative process of imparting knowledge of eternal truths should not be taken literally, for, as the eternal *spirit* of man is in its *essential* nature, free from all taint or corruption, we must necessarily hold that birth, disease, and death and all the corruptions to which life in the world is subject can only be the attributes of our physical frame.

We come at last to the Advaitic doctrine of the Vedanta. Here, we find the theory of Vicarious Atonement—whether in the Christian form of the transfer of the burdens of all human beings, *once for all*, to the shoulders of the Divine Incarnation, or in the more acceptable, logical, and practicable *Vaishnava* form of

Nikshepa (called also *Nyasa*), i. e., the placing of the burden of liberating each man on his own living *Acharya* (or intercessor with God)—is altogether non-existent. The Advaitin, too, accepts the need and even indispensability of an *Acharya*. It must be accepted, because common-sense, everyday experience, and the *Veda* too, teach us that the ignorant, struggling, suffering, sinning soul wants an enlightener and helper to discover to him and guide him along the path to be followed in order to cross this seemingly shoreless ocean of *Samsaric* life of endless births and deaths. The *Veda*, in especial, assures us :—“ (Only) the person who has an *Acharya* can know (the Supreme Self). ” The *Acharya* is not only one who has learned the traditional teaching from his own teacher, and so on in a line of succession leading up to the Creator Himself, but through him also passes, in the same line of succession, and without any interruption, God’s infinite mercy and grace which helps to enlighten the understandings of all who seek the blessing of redemption and the eternal bliss of self-realisation.

Both these form essential elements in the spiritual equipment of an *Acharya*, *first*, an inspiring and impressive personality capable of conveying the traditional teachings, in their speculative and practical aspects ; *second*, the transmission of divine grace, flowing through him as through a conduit, and helping to make his work fruitful and truly enlightening. We may briefly dwell on these points : *First*, even in our secular education, it is our daily experience that, when the teacher possesses the gift of personality, the pupil rises at once above his old helplessness, indifference, or mediocrity, and displays a power of comprehension and advance which he never before possessed. The influence of personality is seen to be equally efficacious in the formation of character. The fact of personality, however mysterious, is indisputable. *Secondly*, the grace (*anugraha*) of God is, according to the Vedanta, like a perennially flowing

stream, and passes through a line of teachers, each of whom, in his own turn, has been a disciple, and therefore, a recipient of the same. There is no difficulty in conceiving this direct transmission of divine help from teacher to pupil, for, God is accepted as a pervading presence and personality seated in the hearts of all, and so can influence both teacher and disciple at the same time. There is no need to conceive it in the likeness of a stream flowing from one place to another, or of a dose of medicine given by a doctor to cure the disease of his patient. According to the Advaitic doctrine, there is but one soul only without a second, and it is only the beginningless ignorance due to its identification with *Maya* (i.e., matter, nature) that has led to the perception of all the differences in the universe. The idea of unity or identity (*abheda*) has also to be taken account of and realised in its true significance in comprehending how the divine grace is transmitted from the teacher to his chosen disciple. In the first place, it makes him perceive more clearly than ever before how his sinfulness and sensuality is only an attribute of his mental and material nature, and not of his *spirit* (*Atman* or self) which is—to use the language of the Upanishad—*niranjanam paramam samyam*. “entirely untouched by evil and absolutely one.” Man’s disobedience of divine law only affects his mental and physical nature with sinfulness and sensuality, and not his innermost self, the spirit which is ever perfect and sinless. The Christian ideas of Fall and Redemption become clear and intelligible when we comprehend the Advaitic idea that sensuality and selfishness can only attach to the soul in its *fallen* condition, with all the limitations (bondages, *bandhas*) of which it is fully conscious in all the three states and conditions in life (*Avasthas*) known as *jagrat* (waking), *svapna* (dream), and *sushupti* (sleep). If our human self includes both *purusha* and *prakriti* (both *prakara* and *prakari*, nature and spirit), if it is only *akin* to the divine—it can never rise above the limitations

which are imposed by nature (*prakriti*), and redemption from its complication with evil can only be a hopeless dream. Grace, however fully mediated, can never alter the essential composition of man's self which makes it liable to err and is ever speeding for a fall. Hence, its mingling with materiality, sensuality, and sinfulness must be conceived as due to a false super-imposition of and consequent commingling with matter (and sense-objects) at a time of which we can know nothing,—for the state of ignorance and the state of sinfulness have become mutually so much “implicated,” so to speak, and endured so long that purity of the Self has itself become impossible for us even to conceive. In fact, the very conception of purity is impossible without mind, and therefore, must be understood as due to the limitation of the Self by *prakriti*. Hence, the Advaitic doctrine conceives the Self in its absolute essence as free from both bondage and liberation, from both *bandha* and *mukti*. The Veda emphatically asserts this fact in the passage above quoted, viz., “*niranjanam paramam samyam.*” In the second place, divine grace augments the value and force of the efforts independently made by the disciple to attain to the purity of mind which is the essential preliminary to the shining experience of the Innermost Bliss of Love within the human understanding whose vision is now limited to the narrow range of the phenomenal world. Man is in truth only the one spirit, even as God is ; but so long as he carries within his mind the corrupting effects of his contact with the world of matter, he can never cross the ocean of rebirth and sorrow which lies between him and the unknown and unidentified Divinity of the Absolute Self enshrined in his own heart.

The doctrine of redemption through a Mediator or Vicarious Atonement is now either ignored altogether or relegated to a position of unimportance by men of faith or culture everywhere. Every doctrine, whether old or new, has in these times to satisfy but one test, what moral

or spiritual *value* attaches to the experience which it brings to humanity. The world is now fully awakened to the consideration that ignorance is the only source of sensuality, selfishness and sin, and he alone is a helper or mediator who can, *here and now*, lead us to the revelation and realisation of the Light of the Innermost Bliss of the Self that lightens up every human heart at its very entrance into the world.

K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR.

THE MYSTIC PATH

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

(Continued from page 255)

THE practice of the mystic path is divided into eight steps. The first and second, *Yama* and *Niyama*, include all the ethical laws that govern our moral nature. All the fundamental principles of ethics taught by Buddha and all the truths proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount are contained in these first two steps. Without the strong foundation of morality and purity of character, nothing worth while can be built in the realm of spirituality. One must remember that purity, chastity and morality are the very corner-stone of the structure of the science of yoga.

In the requirements of the first step we find *Ahimsa*, *Satyam*, *Asteyam* and *Brahmacharya*. *Ahimsa* is non-injury. Non-injury must be in thought, word and deed; so with *Satyam*, truthfulness; and *Asteyam*, non-covetousness. Chastity in thought, word and deed, always and in all conditions, is what is called *Brahmacharya*.

The second step is *Niyama*, which includes *Tapas*, austerity; *Svadyaya*, study; *Santosa*, contentment; *Saucham*, purity; and *Iswara Pranidhana*, the worship of God. Fasting, or in other ways controlling the body, is called *Tapas*, austerity. *Svadyaya*, or study, is the regular study of such books and holy scriptures that give us the impetus to the realisation of God, the study of such books that help us to remember the highest ideal. Study also means repetition of the *mantram* or the name of the Lord. Repetition, again, is of three kinds, verbal, semi-verbal and mental. The repetition which is loud is verbal. The repetition of the name of Lord has a great effect on our mind. It helps us to drive away the evil thoughts and desires from our mind. Sri

Ramakrishna, the Great Master, used to say that, when a tree is crowded with crows, if one goes under it and claps his hand, the crows fly away ; so when evil thoughts crowd our mind, if we repeat the name of the Lord, they fly away and we become free from those thoughts. The next higher kind of repetition is where only the lips move, but no sound is heard. The inaudible repetition of the *mantram*, when even the lips do not move, accompanied by the sustained thought of its meaning, is called the mental repetition, and is the highest. Then comes *Soucham*, purity. Both external and internal purification are necessary to become a Yogi : purification of the body by water, as bathing, and internal purification, or the purification of the mind, attained by truth and by the practice of other virtues. *Isvar Pranidhana*, or worship of God, is by praise, by thought and by devotion.

We have spoken about *Yama* and *Niyama*. The next step is *Asana* or posture. A series of exercises, physical and mental, is to be gone through with everyday until certain higher steps are reached. Therefore it is quite necessary that we should practise a certain posture in which we can remain long. As one practices the spiritual exercises, new sorts of vibrations will begin, the whole constitution will be re-modelled, as it were. And the vortex of the vibratory activity of the subtle force in the body called *Prana* will pass through the *Sushumna* in the spinal column ; so one thing necessary for the posture is to hold the spinal column free, sitting erect, holding the chest, neck and head in a straight line.

Next comes *Pranayama*, or the breathing exercises. Lungs are like the fly-wheel in this machine of a body. As in a big engine the fly-wheel moves and carries motion to finer and finer parts of the whole machine, so do the lungs by breath supply and give motive power to everything that goes on in the body. The mind and body, as you all know, are inter-related. The control of the mind de-

depends on the control of the body and vice versa. Prof. James, the great psychologist of America was the first experimental psychologist in the West. And he has proved beyond the least shadow of doubt that if we can control the body we can also control the mind. And as you all know the restlessness of the mind is exhibited by the irregularity in breathing. So, if we control irregularity of breathing by regular breathing exercises, we advance a great deal in controlling the restless condition of the mind and in attaining the power of concentration.

As I gave you the psycho-physiological analysis of the Yogis, I mentioned the two 'nerve-currents'—the *Ida* and the *Pingala*;—but I did not speak then of the function of these nerve-currents in spiritual exercises. In Sanskrit these *Ida* and *Pingala* are called nerves, *Nadi*, but it must be remembered that they are not nerves in the modern physiological sense of the term, although their functions appear partly analogous to the two chains of sympathetic ganglia. *Nadis* are conduits of *Prana*. Now, as *Prana* signifies both breath, and the vital energy that sustains the physical system, these *Nadis* were supposed, by the ancient Yogis, to function both in respiration and in the nerve currents : one in inhalation and the afferent current and the other in exhalation and the efferent current. As in every other matter, the Hindu philosophers saw the subtle counterpart of the gross. They found that these *Nadis* were not only nerves for the gross physiological nerve currents but were also channels of the life-elements (*Prana*) of the subtle body ; nay, they represent the positive and the negative aspects of the same energy which we find interacting in every form of activity. Hence, you see the control of breath means the control of the vital energy proceeding from the gross to the subtle. This control brings about an inner rhythm which is symbolically spoken of by the Yogis as *Nadi Suddhi*. Without this *Nadi Suddhi* or inner rhythm of life element (*Prana*), no spiritual life is possible. When the

Prana is thus controlled made rhythmic and focussed upon the *Muladhara*, the basic centre, the dormant *Kundalini* is awakened and creeps up through *Sushumna* towards the *Sahasrara*, the cerebral centre. Then only dawns the mystic spiritual life upon the Yogin.

The fifth practice is *Pratyahara*, freeing the mind from the thralldom of the senses. The root-meaning of the word is 'starvation,' i. e., this practice purposes to starve the senses of their respective perceptions. When the senses are restrained from their different sense objects, the mind which ordinarily runs after these senses and sense objects, gets a respite as it were, to collect its different rays and focus them on a point. So to have control over the mind through the control of the senses is the practice referred to. Ordinarily we are slaves to our mind, and this restless mind has to be brought under control. You all know how, when we try to concentrate our mind on a certain ideal or thought, it runs away in spite of ourselves. The practice is that, regardless of whatever cause it runs away from the Ideal, it has to be brought again and again to dwell on the Ideal. That is what is meant by the control over the mind. There are certain exercises which, if practised, helps us to bring the mind under control. As for instance, you keep a constant watch over your mind, it will come under your control. What generally happens is this : we try to concentrate on one ideal, and do not notice when the mind has run away from the Ideal and has busied itself with other thoughts. If you let the mind run and at the same time keep watch over it, you will find you are again gathering its forces together.

The next step is *Dharana*, or concentration. Concentration becomes easier, when, through the practice of *Pratyahara*, we have been able to bring the mind under control. Concentration means holding the mind on one centre, or, in the language of the mystics, on one of the lotuses already described. But the form or content of

concentration will vary according to the temperament and taste of different individuals. Through the practice of concentration the student or the aspirant experiences the real joy of spiritual life. If you analyse your own life, you will find that concentration is the real secret of happiness. Even in our sense enjoyments you will find that the more our mind gets concentrated, the more we enjoy even the sense-objects. But in enjoying the sense-objects we lose the power of concentration and ultimately we lose the power to enjoy also. But in the cultivation of concentration on the Divine Ideal, our power of concentration grows more and more and we derive real joy out of the practices.

And then, when we begin to taste the real joy, our mind naturally attains to the next higher state of *Dhyana*, or meditation. When concentration becomes steady and continuous, when there is no disturbing thought, but only the thought of the Divine Ideal and that Ideal alone, that is said to be the state of meditation.

Through these practices of *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana* and *Dhyana*, the *Kundalini* will rise through the canal called *Sushumna*, through the different centres or lotuses, and we begin to experience wonderful visions and attain wonderful powers. Ultimately, when we attain to the state of real meditation, the *Kundalini* rises to the highest centre, the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain and we achieve the highest experience—the *Samadhi*, or superconscious state. In this state, the spiritual eye, as it were, is opened, and one realises that his true self is one with the Universal Spirit, and he receives all the revelation and inspiration that can possibly come to the human soul. In the words of the Great Master, Sri Krishna—"When the mind, absolutely restrained by the practice of concentration, attains quietude, and when seeing self by the self, is satisfied in his

own self ; when he feels that infinite bliss—which is perceived by the purified intellect and which transcends the senses, and established wherein he never departs from his real state ; and having obtained which no other acquisition is regarded superior, and wherein established he is not moved even by heavy sorrow ;—let that be known as the state called by the name of Yoga,—a state of severance from the contact with pain.” One becomes free and attains mastery over the whole of nature external and internal.

In conclusion, I wish to point out to you that these different practices of yoga have to be learnt from a Yogi teacher. We cannot really get the practices in detail from any book, as the details must differ with different individuals. These details have to be learnt from the Teacher, who can study the individual lives and prescribe the paths accordingly.

(Concluded)

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

M. H. SYED, B. A., L. T.

THE world is never tired of hearing about the need of progress, advancement in every department of life, and yet we do not progress in the true sense of the word. We simply mark time. We are deluded into thinking we are moving onward and yet when we examine the steps we have put forward, in the cold light of reason, we find to our surprise that essentially we are where we were. Judging our progress from the highest achievable goal, the ideal that is really worth attaining, we discover to our disappointment that we have not reached any nearer the summit to which we have been endeavouring to climb. In the midst of bewildering varieties of passion, physical and mental enjoyments, we are so much lost and veritably hypnotised that unless we receive some rude shocks and hard knocks as we occasionally do, we never pause for a moment to take stock of our doings.¹ It is then that we truly realize for the time being that we are still pursuing shadow and have not yet risen above illusion, we are still captured by momentary objects of sense and are not yet even in distant sight of the Promised Land, the haven of rest and peace, the final goal of our search. It may be remarked that with the stream of evolutionary waves every one is slowly but surely swimming towards the shore and hence it will be untrue to say that we are not progressing. The answer to this remark is that in the course of evolution we shall cross the sea of *Samsara* which will take in other words, æons and countless ages.

Those who have become alive to a true blissful state of existence completely free from decay and change, should not rest content with a mere passing show and be seduced by the shadowy progress that does not lead to the Eternal Rest and Home, but keeps us whirling round the ocean of death and existence. This is no advancement at all for one whose eyes are slightly opened and who has learnt to discriminate between the real and the unreal, shadow and reality, shade and substance. True progress lies in the realisation of Spirit, Self ; after attaining which nothing better or more remains to be

attained or done. Nothing that does not lead mankind to the lofty height and highest goal, may be considered progress.

* * * * *

Does God take interest in human affairs ? Does He guide them ? Is everything that is happening in the outer world the result of a fixed plan ?

Most assuredly yes. Because the world as we see it, is the expression of His Divine Will, and manifestation of His Divine Power. But for Him the world would not be what it is. Every life is enlivened by Him, every form is ensouled and shaped by His vital force. There is absolutely nothing that can possibly exist bereft of Him. He is the indwelling spirit in all.

As He is the hidden life vibrant in every atom, it stands to reason that He cannot and does not remain indifferent to His creatures. He is fully responsive to our thought of Him, and ever watchful of our well-being. While thus helping and guiding us He does not interfere with our individual liberty of action. He does not stop us from rushing head-long towards material enjoyment, because in that way, for the time being, our growth lies. Unless we gain experience of every lower and higher type of pleasure in the course of our upward journey, we shall not be able in the long run to fix our eyes and set our heart on the eternal bliss which we are destined to attain in the course of time. Another reason for his non-interference is that as separated *Jivas* we share His universal life and eternal freedom potentially. Therefore every individual is free to choose for himself what is best for him or what his particular stage in evolution requires him to do. Thus the divine way of dealing with the people of the world may be summed up as follows :—

He is deeply and rationally interested in our affairs and in us, in so far as it does not run counter to the Law of Evolution which is the one law of life that dominates all our activities.

As we grow spiritually and thus learn consciously to harmonise our individual wills with His, we shall understand His way and His will more clearly and intelligently and cease to chafe at Karma.

* * * * *

"Weapons cleave him not, nor fire burneth him, nor water weteth him, nor wind drieth him away." Why? Because these are made of matter and as such they can change and transform each others' forms but have no vital capacity to injure the spirit indwelling them. Like is influenced by like. Material objects can be formed or deformed by their own cognate objects but have no power to affect non-material things. Spirit as spirit stands apart and has absolutely no affinity with matter; one is the opposite of the other as poles are asunder.

The powerful rules over the powerless. The spirit is mightier and infinitely higher than matter whose characteristic is disintegration and is therefore inherently weak and elusive. The characteristic of spirit is unity and therefore it is strong and mighty. All life and strength come from it. Man is essentially spirit and not matter. It is the realization of this fact that constitutes spiritual life.

True religious or spiritual life begins from the moment when one feels satiated with the enjoyment of transitory pleasures and feels no attraction for any thing earthly. In other words, when a man attains what is called *Vairagya*, 'dispassion' and turns away from every kind of mundane objects, then he becomes entitled to lead a truly higher life. God and Mammon cannot go together. The same idea is expressed by Jaluddin Rumi, "To desire both the mean world as well as God, is a mere chimera, an impossibility and idiocy." The essence of religious life is whole-hearted devotion, unalloyed purity of heart and complete resignation to the will of God. So long as a man has a will of his own and wishes to acquire things for his personal gain, and instead of giving to spiritual ends the uppermost place in this thought, allows himself to be dragged by ever so many sensuous pleasures, he is far away from the Reality which he seeks to attain. The outer bonds of heart must be broken utterly and attached to higher and loftier regions of life. Until this is done, it is futile to talk of religious or spiritual life.

Why does our mind love to dwell upon and run after every kind of material things? Because it has an affinity with them and shares their material nature. Mind and

matter come from the same stock, have the same essence and characteristic, therefore one is the outcome of the other and naturally drawn from the other. It is not easy to subdue this unruly horse unless one tries to understand its nature and function. When it is found that mind is made of finer matter and differs from the indwelling self in its nature and constitution, the non-material self will assert its superiority over it and will gradually try to bring it under its control.

One need not be disheartened if one finds it difficult to check it from wandering. It has been running and constantly moving after illusory things for ages. It will be some time before it can be trained and ruled by one's own will, the direct expression of higher and permanent self as opposed to the lower and passing one.

Freedom : spiritual, political, personal. Freedom in any sphere of life is the legitimate desire of man because he is essentially and inherently free in his potential nature struggling to realise freedom which is his birth-right, in actual life also. If there is any thing that a man resents and is anxious to get rid of, it is bondage, restriction and limitation, and quite naturally so.

So long a person, in whatever position of life he may be, is free to do what he chooses, he is happy ; but the moment he is bound down in any way he begins to fret and worry, having been deprived of his natural freedom.

The same simple but significant principle holds good in all types of cases, high or low, human or divine.

In the realms of Higher Life, the highest goal of man is considered to be liberation from the round of birth and death, and the galling limitations of physical senses and physical vehicles.

Personal and national freedom are also based on the same principle.

Freedom of thought and action within certain limits and with accompanying responsibility is the genuine right of man. It is but right that if a person's freedom is in any way jeopardised he should not only feel its unfairness but also try to gain his personal right.

Similarly those countries or nations that are living under political domination and are considered as subject races, should not rest content till they have achieved their national freedom.

This is the most commendable desire surging in the human heart. By virtue of his essential and inward freedom no man on earth who is averagely evolved can ever be happy unless he regains his personal and national liberty.

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In the East, especially in the ancient Hindu thought, there has never been recognised, nor does there really exist, any sharp line of demarcation between religion and philosophy. The one is dependent upon the other ; in fact the one remains incomplete without the other. What does philosophy treat of in general ? The ultimate reality, the individual ego, the problems of life and form, meaning of pain and pleasure and the final destiny of man. Now, religion, strictly speaking, deals with these questions more or less in an attitude of reverence. The attempt of philosophy in the East has always been to make the one the necessary counterpart of the other and the two subservient to each other. There never has existed any unbridgable gulf between the two. The one may be treated as a science and the other as an art. What we intellectually apprehend and theorise in the domain of philosophy we put into practice and realise in our daily life. Mere truth in the abstract does not help a man in his moral and spiritual advancement. He must translate it into action before he can fully grasp the meaning of what he speculates.

So long as a man has not fully transcended material limitations and is still swayed by material forms and phases, he is in the nature of things liable to make mistakes, which belong mostly to his physical life and are due to his age-long relation with matter.

One who understands this principle, does not expect much from the men of the world who are greatly dominated by matter. He takes every thing and every person with a grain of salt and hardly cherishes unreserved admiration for any body. This fact also throws enough light on the existence of some kind of weakness in exalted persons. Man in high or low position, is not fully perfect. He is becoming so ; and therefore one should not wonder nor feel depressed if

one discovers flaws in the life and character of men otherwise good and holy in so many ways. This principle explains to us, to no little extent, many apparent anomalies in human nature.

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It is rather hard to define consciousness metaphysically. All that an average man can say is that "consciousness of some sort goes on," "states of mind succeed each other in him."

The sense of consciousness varies from man to man according to his grade in evolution.

The meaning of spiritual consciousness may be summed up in the ancient logion, "I am I." In other words, this may be called a state of pure *Atmic* consciousness *minus* all its vehicles. Consciousness will forthwith alter its meaning when it is sensed or realised in terms of material objects.

The self *plus* its sheaths has a different consciousness. As we grow and evolve, refine our vehicles and subdue matter with its variety of forms, the fact of consciousness undergoes its value and sense *pari passu*.

M. H. SYED, B. A., L. T.

FLOOD RELIEF

SWAMI GHANANANDA

"Money is nothing. For the last twelve years of my life, I did not know where my next meal would come from; but money and everything I want must come, because they are my slaves and not I theirs. Money and everything else must come. Must,—that is the word. Where are the men? That is the question. Young men of Madras, my hope is in you. Will you respond to the call of the nation?"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

FLOODS in the north of India where there are large rivers rising from snow-capped mountains are commoner than in the south. No country through which a river flows is, however, immune from their attack. This is shown by the recent floods in the southern districts of India. No such floods have occurred there within living memory.

As rivers afford many natural facilities, large villages and towns and even cities grow on their banks. When the rivers swell in times of floods, the houses and huts on the banks and near are either entirely washed away or partly pulled down. Whole stretches of land are thrown over with deep layers of silt which is a source of fertilisation if it consists of alluvial soil, but causes damage if it be sand. Often all means of communication are cut off completely, and consequently also the supply of provisions. The lowest and middle classes suffer most, and necessity for relief is felt after every abnormal flood.

Informations about the floods can be received through newspapers as well as from passengers travelling from the affected area. Though a flood relief party which intends to work can fairly rely on them, it must personally investigate and reconnoitre the area before judging for itself the necessity for relief or otherwise. Relief, if found necessary, should be given as early as practicable. It may often happen that several villages and portions of towns are surrounded by water or so isolated that the inhabitants suffer for want of food. In such cases, speedy rescue is the necessity of the hour. Every town and village may have its own local workers, but in times of abnormal floods, workers from several other

parts of the country will be doubtless required. It is a pity that in many parts of India, the people have little or nothing of civic consciousness in them, and do not care to form bands or groups of workers from amongst the citizens, officials, and school and college students of suitable age. Where there is a will, there is a way. Even those who have to do some regular daily work to eke out their livelihood as under the Government can set apart a few hours every day for the suffering and the destitute during the times of flood or famine. Students, who, as a whole, are the least selfish and most capable of enthusiastic work, in and around the affected area, can be granted leave for a fixed period and enlisted as volunteers, under careful leaders who will watch and guide them. The best work is often done by the students as they work wholeheartedly and with entire devotion when they are willing. Misery is a great leveller and unifier but fails to rouse the callous and the apathetic from their languor and lethargy.

Several relief parties under the inspiration of selfless, strong and capable men to whom service is not only a pleasure and privilege but also a worship, who are imbued with a spirit of work undaunted, who can strive and do in the face of all obstacles and dangers, who have to gain nothing and have no axe to grind of their own, will render the most splendid service. They will have to be sent throughout the affected areas which should be divided into strips or blocks for purposes of relief. They will have to open relief centres in all the chief and commanding positions of the affected area, from which work can be easily spread around. Each relief centre can conveniently work within a radius of four, five, or six miles. To follow arbitrary divisions of area made for relief is almost always better than to follow revenue or geographical divisions such as province, district, or taluq. Portions of two or three districts, or two or three taluqs bordering each other can be well brought under a single centre, a radius of a few miles from which will cover them all. In one block of the affected area, a relief party can have a chief centre which can command the facilities of a post, and if possible, also a telegraph, office, and the remaining centres in that block will work as sub-centres under it. The chief worker in the block will live in the chief centre, direct the work of the sub-centres, and do the work in his own. Remittances of money and important communications regarding work from the Head-quarters can

be received in the chief centre, and visitors and enquirers about relief can obtain informations from it.

As many among the lowest classes, and even some belonging to the low middle classes may be addicted to drink, and as any money doled out may be misused by them, a relief party should always bear in mind that in almost no case, relief in money can be given. Should pecuniary aid be requested for, it must be very limited and cautiously rendered. The relief party must therefore make it a general principle to give relief only in kind. It must begin that part of the relief which may have to be immediately attended to, like feeding, and may put off such work as housing the poor and affected families by a short period.

Once the rescue work, wherever necessary, is over, the relief work that remains falls into three distinct divisions, *viz.*, feeding, clothing, and housing. A fourth item of work may have to be attended to in certain portions of the area where the poor peasants and others have to be "started on their legs" by providing them with seeds, fodder for cattle, looms for weaving, implements for work and so forth. The conditions of several parts of the affected area may not require all these items of relief work to be carried out. In some places, one or more of the items can be avoided.

If, in parts of the affected area people are found to have been starving for some time after a flood and require food to be immediately given, some dry food like fried or puffed rice can be given once or twice to serve the immediate need, and then some cooked food. But this may not be usually needed for more than a day as the flood-stricken will become fit enough by that time to cook for themselves.

The most important thing to be done before relief is started on a large scale is the preparation of a correct and reliable list of the lowest and the low middle class flood-affected families. This list will serve well with necessary modifications for all the kinds of relief, feeding, clothing and housing. The workers must themselves visit the huts to find out those who require and deserve relief. The test of deservedness for food relief will be, firstly, the families own no landed properties, secondly, they have no corn or grain stored in their temporary or old huts ; thirdly, they have no cash ; fourthly, they have no credit in the market to enable them to borrow.

In order to make the list quite correct by including only such huts as require and deserve relief, great circumspection should be exercised in discriminating the very indigent and destitute from the comparatively better families.

As a relief agency may not be quite confident of receiving sufficient money from the Head-quarters or from the public, it will do well to begin administering relief with such low classes as the Pariahs, Chucklers, Shanars, Pulayas and Nayadis, and try to extend it gradually to the affected poor of higher classes when it receives more money.

The list or register of the affected families must contain information as to the heads or chief recipients of each family, the number of souls requiring relief in it, the number of men, women, children and babies, and working members, the dates of distribution, the quantity distributed and the kind of grain used. As babies take their mother's milk, the mothers can be given a little more than an adult's share and the children can be given half the same. Small printed tickets with the name of the centre, village, and signature of the worker of the centre must be issued to the chief recipients of the families, and on production of the tickets on days appointed by the worker, doles for each family sufficient for a day or more can be given to its representative member.

The register prepared will serve as a guide to the quantity of grain to be purchased and the quantity to be distributed, and the ticket issued as a mark of identification of each family enrolled.

During times of floods, on account of scarcity of food-grains, the merchants will try to raise their prices and profiteer. A relief agency distributing grain will be helpful to the people, as the prices will naturally have to be kept down. Grain must be purchased directly from the rural markets and not from local shops. Due to the distribution of food-grain to the affected poor, the demand for grain in the local shops will be less and consequently raising of prices and profiteering will be, to a great extent, prevented. If, however, rice and other grains sell at a dear price, it will be necessary to open depots in the required places and sell them at their normal price or even less.

Some people may believe that the distribution of cooked food (solid or gruel) with some curry is better than the distri-

bution of grain. But the latter is preferable for these reasons :—

(1) the employment of cooks for cooking the food for the Hindus, the Christians, and the Mahomedans ;

(2) the employment of several scores of volunteers for distributing the food to hundreds and thousands of starving recipients and for managing the crowd ;

(3) finding a suitable compound where the poor can conveniently sit and eat ;

(4) the necessity for all the members, young and old, the men, women, children and babies of each flood-affected family to walk all the way from their huts to the centres of distribution every day during the food relief period exposing themselves to the sun or the rain ;

(5) the providing of leaves, plates, etc., for the recipients ;

(6) the cooking of different kinds of grain needed by the recipients to suit their taste ;

(7) the inconvenience which Gosha women and women of respectable, though impoverished, low middle class families will feel in coming to the distribution centres for eating ;

(8) the removal of solid cooked food which is done by the poor almost invariably when they are fed ; and

(9) the great confusion and rush which will result naturally from the distribution of cooked food.

Usually, therefore, food-grain and not cooked food should be distributed.

Of the several kinds of grain available in an affected area, what will suit the majority of the flood-stricken can be used for distribution. In some places where the Pariahs, Chucklers, Shanars and others are accustomed to *kambu* or *ragi*, which is cheaper than rice, it will be advisable to distribute the cheaper grain. Rice also will have to be given wherever necessary.

The extreme importance of the register which serves as a guide for distribution will be realised when the relief workers want to eliminate or cut short the shares of any recipients in a family on finding that they get labour. A relief party will have to be constantly on its guard and take all necessary

measures to find out who all get labour and who all do not. In these matters as well as in the preparation of the register, it can receive a good deal of help from the local karnams, village munsiffs, revenue inspectors, tahsildars, and other reliable and trustworthy gentlemen. Great care must be exercised in accepting or rejecting any information and steps taken to verify its truth. In every detail, like this, of the whole relief work, and in the carrying out of every item of it, from beginning to end, caution and exactness will be required. the fineness and value of the work done depending upon the soundness of the workers, their mental training, conscientiousness and scrupulous devotion to service. Every worker in the relief area must be so trained that no error, however small, may pass undetected or unrectified. Work has its own power of giving satisfaction and peace to the mind when it is done selflessly and thoroughly. A worker will do well to bring the spirit of right activity (*Karma Yoga*) to bear upon his task.

The ration per head per day, to begin with, may be less than half a Madras Measure. But in a few days, it can be reduced. Along with this reduction, the elimination of the shares of those who get work, which information has to be ascertained from time to time, by careful personal inspection of the villages served and personal study of the labour conditions twice or thrice a week should be done. This reduction and elimination will serve to keep up the incentive for work amongst the recipients who will otherwise grow very lazy and indolent.

(To be continued)

SWAMI GHANANANDA

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Hindu Religious Movements

RELIGION SUSTAINS ALL HIGHER ACTIVITIES

THE spirit of religion permeates and sustains all the higher activities of life. The recognition of this fact adds strength to the zeal of the reformer, for it raises him above the sordid concerns of material life and gives him a glimpse of the true goal towards which he and his fellow-beings are steadily progressing. The statesman, the patriot, the social reformer, in short everyone who works for the well-being of society is inspired by ideals which transcend the ordinary concerns of life. Consciously or unconsciously they are guided by the spirit of true religion which has "Sacrifice" for its watch-word and freedom from the bondage of the senses for its noble goal. "The life on earth is a mere vision, a dream and at best is a sojourn towards a higher goal," says the philosopher. The patriot who had not the opportunity to look into the deeper realities of life may turn round with a sarcastic smile and say "Sir Philosopher, you had better keep your visionary theories to yourself ; I know that this life is real, the miseries and sufferings of my fellow-countrymen are too real to escape my notice ; I am prepared to lay down my life in the endeavour to remove the ills of my countrymen and bring them peace and plenty. Do you not see that I have sacrificed my all and remain unfettered to carry on the work to which I have dedicated myself." The patriot who loves his motherland with such love that transcends life itself is indeed filled with the true spirit of religion. Although he swears by the material concerns of life, does he not confess by his action as well as by his words that he himself has risen above the sordid concerns of a worldly life. He has sacrificed his creature-comforts and is prepared to lay down his life for

the Cause to which he has dedicated himself. That Cause is to him something dearer than life itself. If he was really convinced that the material concerns of life were worth struggling for, he would not have turned patriot. On the other hand, he would have led a life of aggrandizement and cheated his fellow-countrymen to serve his own ends. Thus we see that the patriot has a glimpse of the deeper realities of life and in the conscious or unconscious endeavour to manifest his own spiritual nature he counts all miseries and troubles to relieve the sufferings of his fellow-beings. To him the world—by which we mean the life in the senses—is unreal, but he is alive to the sufferings of kindred spirits and knows that in serving them lies the path to his own emancipation. Again, the statesman who constructed his plans for the uplift of his country upon the sure foundations of morality and truth is indeed inspired by the spirit of religion. The time-serving politician who attempts to build upon the quicksands of expediency, putting aside the dictates of Truth, is doing incalculable harm to himself and his country, for Truth alone endures and institutions based upon falsehood must sooner or later meet with their destruction.

RELIGION IS THE SOURCE OF ALL STRENGTH

Again, the most well-meaning person cannot achieve anything unless he has the strength to act up to his convictions. The martyr at the stake and the patriot who defies the threat of tyranny, both draw their strength from the same inexhaustible source. He who consciously seeks this divine source and puts himself in communication with it becomes the possessor of an unlimited store of strength. Vedanta, the cream of all religious philosophies promises to lead its votaries from weakness to strength and from the darkness of ignorance to the light of divine wisdom. But let us bear in mind that even Vedanta cannot elevate that person who sticks to mere

forms disregarding the spirit of religion. The man who performs *Puja* to the Gita book but is such a coward as to take to his heels when duty demands him to hold fast to his post has no real reverence for the teachings of that sublime scripture. His assimilation of the Gita may be likened to that of the moth which has eaten of the paper on which the text of the Gita is written. The gospel that was delivered at the battle-field of Kurukshetra has in it all that is necessary for the scoring of a victory in the battle-field of life. All great religions have in them the power to inspire man to accomplish great and noble acts ; they all teach the immortality of the spirit and declare in unmistakable terms that the fight against the powers of evil should be strenuously kept up until final victory is won. The recognition of the immortality of the spirit is indeed the source of all heroism and it is also the summing up of the highest truths of all religions.

THE RENAISSANCE OF RELIGION

When irreligion is rampant and the good feel themselves helpless to withstand the onslaught of the powers of evil a Saviour appears in the world to demonstrate by His own life the invincibility and might of Truth. Following His wake there appear many lesser lights who shed their lustre on Art, Literature and other noble pursuits,—pursuits which constitute, as it were, a ladder between heaven and earth by combining in themselves heaven and worldly elements. The renaissance of religion, thus brings about an all-round renaissance. Swami Vivekananda often used to say that what was needed was not partial reform but “root-and-branch” reform, and the Swami consequently worked for the revival of the spirit of true religion. With unparalleled apostolic fervour he sacrificed his precious life inch by inch for the spiritual regeneration of India. He sounded the clarion call of religion and India rose from her long slumber conscious of her past glories and

fully aware of the glorious future that was awaiting her. Swamiji clearly showed that strength, manliness, love and renunciation were the essentials of true religion and that forms and sectarian doctrines were only of secondary importance.

REVIVAL MOVEMENTS

The all-consuming love of the great Hindu monk of India is spreading everywhere liberalism of thought and promoting good understanding. Swami Vivekananda wanted a Hindu to be a true Hindu, a Muslim to be a true Muslim and a Christian to be a true Christian, for thus alone could the much-desired-for solidarity between the various communities be attained. It is gratifying to note that this principle put forward by Swamiji is daily gaining ground. Recently some of the Hindu leaders of Bengal met together to discuss the ways and means for organising Hindu religious activities. The president of the meeting, the Maharajah Bahadur of Darbhanga, in the course of his presidential address said, "Religion alone is calculated to raise us from the degraded state into which we have fallen ; it must form our highest aims and aspirations ; religion affords a cause, a reason, or an origin of morality, the consummation of social and domestic life ; religion in short is, and should be, to the Hindu, the be-all and end-all of his life." Commenting upon this revival movement *The Servant* of Calcutta has written a leading article which we quote in full :—

"We welcome the movement for organising our religious life with all our heart. Every race or community lives and grows on a faith, on a sense of mission, on a high purpose in life. Take this out of it and it is a mass of bondless human units who cannot unite to any purpose. The trite saying that man does not live by bread alone with its apparently other-worldly ring is a hard fact of this material world. Where is the race or community that has made its mark in the world by simply concentrating on the provision of its creature-comforts ? Even these comforts will elude your grasp, as we see it

to our cost to-day, unless they are sought to subserve a higher interest. Take upon yourself the service of God, the fulfilling of His purpose, the doing of His will and He will take care of all your animal needs just as He does in respect of the lilies of the field that neither spin nor toil. Since the hour the Hindus ceased to be animated by the aim and object which made their forbears what they were, trouble after trouble, misery after misery, mishap after mishap has crowded into their life which is now about to sink under the fatal pressure of these accumulated ills. Leaven our life again with its higher aim and object and it is as sure to buoy up as a cork buoys up though long pressed down. Make a nominal Hindu a true Hindu, a nominal Mussalman a true Mussalman and many of our racial and national problems will take care of themselves. Seek ye the kingdom of God and everything else will be added unto you—this is the last word of wisdom, this is the highest practical politics and how can you live up to it without making the religion you are born to a living and moving force. The much-needed reconstruction is the reconstruction of the religious life and Hinduism must read the signs of the times and act accordingly. Has not divine Paul also urged the necessity of being fortified with truth as the only armour which avails. All else is mere broken reed."

Politics, social reform and even educational reform are only side-issues. Let the life-giving ideals of religion be sown broadcast and the awakened sense of national life would manifest its fulness by bringing about all necessary reforms.

RECENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Islamic Review for December, 1924 :—We are afraid that Mr. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall has not been able to achieve the cause of Hindu-Muslim *en tente*, which we are sure is nearest his heart, by the observations which he has expressed in his paper on "Islamic Tolerance in India" in the *Islamic Review* for December, 1924. Religious tolerance is admittedly the basic principle of Islamic religion and propagation by the sword wherever it has taken place is an unfortunate phase in the history of Islam. But what is the need for sentiments such as those extracted below :—'. . . in all the Muslim States which have survived the break-up of the Moghul Empire and our British tendency to grab on any legal pretext the Hindu citizens possess acknowledged rights as they did in the Moghul Empire itself. Far different is the case of Muslim subjects in Hindu States of the Peninsula ; in most, if not quite all of which, Muslim subjects are regarded as intrusive foreigners, deserving no consideration. In Kashmere, where the Muslims form 95 per cent. of the population under a Hindu ruler, they have been plundered right and left, deprived of education and rendered subject to the Hindu 5 per cent. Quite lately, in the Hindu State of Bharatpur, a number of mosques were ordered to be demolished by the Hindu ruler, without the least consideration for the feelings of his Muslim subjects ; nor have the protests of the Muslim population been at all regarded.' ' It is unfortunate that Mr. Pickthall should have allowed himself to write in this strain.

In the *Vedic Magazine* for September, 1924. Pandit Dharma Deva Siddhantalankar discusses the sanction for and the significance of *Yajnopavita* as a sacred symbol. He quotes passages from the Rig, Yajur and Atharva Vedas sanctioning the use of *Yajnopavita*. The right of the three *Varnas* for using the sacred thread is not questioned but in the Parasara Grihya Sutra, the Upanayana of even persons born in the Shudra families, who are of good character is sanctioned by the shastras except for Shudras who eat unclean food, who are without character and who have given up the study of the Vedas. As for women, in ancient times, they were enjoying not only the right of studying the Vedas, but also of wearing the sacred thread after the performance of Upanayanam as may be seen from the writings of the Smriti writers,—Harita, Yama. Regarding the significance of the *Yajnopavita*, the Pandit says that one who is invested with the sacred thread is expected to study the Vedas as far as it lies in his power. *Yajnopavita* is a symbol to remind

the wearer of it of the three-fold duties of preserving the purity of body, of mind and spirit. It is equally regarded as a sacred symbol to remind the wearer of the duty of aiming at the harmonious development of body, mind and soul, and a steadfast resolve to follow the three-fold path that leads to God, namely knowledge, disinterested action (Yajna) and devotion.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has a characteristic paper on the education of the child in the *Modern Review* for October, 1924. His complaint is that the present system of education refuses to admit that children are children, in that they are punished because they fail to behave like grown up people and have the impertinence to be noisy children. The modern schoolmaster wants to mould the child's mind according to his ready-made doctrines, and through this tyranny of the adult mind children are everywhere suffering. The aim of true education is to make the boy a full man—full in all directions, mentally and spiritually, and to this end, children have to be brought up in an atmosphere of freedom. The schoolmaster to whom is entrusted the training of the child will need all the sympathy and understanding and imagination which he can command, for his great task. It is on these lines that the great poet is training his boys in his Bolpur School and his advice, born of experience, should appeal to educational reformers in this country.

THE RELIGION OF TIBET :—*The Occult Review* for December, 1924, has an informing paper on the Religion of Tibet by Captain J. E. Ellam. Buddhism was introduced into Tibet from India in the sixth century about 1200 years after the death of Buddha by the Tibetan King Strong-tsan-Gampo, who had married two wives, one Chinese and the other Nepalese, both of whom were Buddhists. The form of Buddhism which was introduced into Tibet was a mixture of Mahayana, with the ancient Animistic Bon Religion of Tibet. The ecclesiastical system known as Lamaism was founded by one Padma Sambhava, the "Wizard Priest." Tradition has it that he was a Mahayanist monk from the great Indian University of Nalanda. He is said to have been of the Yogacharya School, and to have gone to Tibet at the invitation of King Thi-stong-d-tsan in 747 B. C. In the eleventh Christian Century, an Indian Buddhist monk, Atisha, also a Mahayanist, went to Tibet, and introduced reforms in the direction of monastic celibacy and a stricter moral code.

At the head of the Tibetan "pantheon" is Adi-Buddha, the impersonal source of all beings, without beginning or end, that which is

formless, nameless and inconceivable, in and by which all phenomenal existence manifests. This is symbolised in its innumerable aspects by the various "powers" of which Chenrise incarnated in the Dalai Lama, is the most popular. The other greater powers, the Dhyana, or heavenly Buddhas, are also aspects of the Adi-Buddha. These are spiritual, belonging to the "formless worlds," emanations of the Adi-Buddha. The human Buddhas as Gotama, are considered as existent in the "worlds of form," though beyond the necessity of incarnation, and able to assist the efforts of struggling humanity. A little lower are the human Bodhisatvas, also belonging to the worlds of form, of which Maitreya, the Buddha to come, is the most notable. Below these are the saints and further down these are innumerable local spirits and demons of all kinds, most of whom are regarded as mischievous and capable of producing diseases and calamities. The people of Tibet are in constant dread of these demons and the Lamas who alone have the powers of exorcism are naturally a most formidable priesthood. The power of the Lamas lies in their supposed ability to bring good or ward off evil future by means of their religious ceremonies. Tantraism is a feature of Tibetan Buddhism, and it is claimed that underneath all the intricate ritual of the religious ceremonies is a deep esoteric significance.

A. S.

COMMENTS AND CRITICISM.

The so-called standards of civilization set up by the West are crumbling to pieces under the stress of modern civilization, because they have not taken into account the development of the individual. False standards of life have blurred our vision and the undue development of the city at the expense of the village is responsible for completing the ruin by sapping the vitality of the nation's manhood and incidentally womanhood which can live and grow only in the pure unsullied atmosphere of the country. The civilization of to-day has, in the words of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, (*The Visva Bharathi Quarterly*, October, 1924), "turned into a vast catering establishment." It maintains a constant feast for a whole population of gluttons. The universal greed, produced as a consequence, is the cause of the meanness, cruelty and lies in politics and commerce, that vitiates the whole human atmosphere. The consequence of such material and moral drain is more evident when one studies the conditions manifested in the fatness of the cities and the physical and mental anæmia of the villages, almost everywhere in the world. The remedy for this state of things, Dr. Tagore thinks, lies in the reconstruction of rural life. Villages are

like women, and in her keeping is the cradle of human race. Villages are nearer to nature than towns and are therefore in closer touch with the fountain of life. They have the atmosphere which possesses a natural power of healing. But when constant strain is put upon her through the extortionate claim of ambition, when her resources are exploited through the excessive stimulus of temptation, then she becomes poor in life, her mind becomes dull and inactive, and she is degraded to the position of a maid-servant. While in its turn, the city in its egotism and pride, remains unconscious upon the devastation it constantly works upon the very source of its life and health and joy.

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Cities there must be in man's civilization, just as in higher organisms, there must be organised centres of life, such as the brain, heart or stomach. But our modern cities feed upon the whole social organism that runs through the villages. They continually drain away the life stuff of the community and slough off a huge amount of dead matter, while assuming a blind counterfeit of prosperity, resulting in an almost complete substitution of true civilization by what the West calls progress. We have great faith in the mission of the Visva-Bharathi which has for its object the reconstruction of the villages and to bring to the villages wealth and knowledge ; wealth of space in which to live and wealth of time in which to work and rest and to enjoy.

We started by saying that the so-called modern civilization has not taken into account the true development of the individual. Europe denies this allegation. Europe is incessantly singing pæans to Freedom, which to her means freedom to enjoy, freedom to work. In the process of attaining freedom a man must bend his will in order to save his forces from destruction and waste and this has tended to make him a slave. Individualism was also the object of India's quest : it stretched up towards self-emancipation, and it tried to gain this larger individual freedom through every detail of life, every relation of family and society, in the strict regulation of the most intimate details of the daily life. In the artistic conception of the scheme of the life of a Hindu in its four-fold aspects of *Brahmacharya*, *Garhastya*, *Vanaprastha*, and *Parivrajaka* is to be found the key to the sublime harmony of the universe having no room for untrained desires to pursue their destructive career unchecked, but leading them on to their relations with the Supreme. As so well put by the poet in the pages of the *Modern Review*, India's aim has been to guide life's current through its boundaries of banks towards an unbounded sea of freedom.

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Modern Europe falls very much short of this ideal, with disastrous results as we shall see. Death or the dissolution of our physical

existence and of the environment which it builds up is certain. Modern Europe says we enfeeble the moral purpose of our existence if we put too much stress on the illusiveness of the world. Europe has no doubt gained a certain strength by pinning its faith on the world by refusing to dwell on its evanescence, on the certainty of death, and has thereby trained to be more efficient in *competition*, to gain victory in the struggle which in her view represents *the whole of life*. 'We admit, that though all our mortal relationships have their end, we cannot ignore them with impunity while they last. And yet all our works which make for the composition of our life have to be judged according to their harmony with their background, namely, death. In this way should we reconcile in harmony the spirit of attachment and detachment, as in the inimitable dance of Siva, which is a harmony of bondage and freedom, the male principle of Truth representing freedom which is of the spirit, while the Goddess Sivani, its female principle, represents the bonds which are of the real. In their union dwells the ideal of perfection. In that way is effected in India the reconciliation of the opposite aspects of bondage and freedom, of the means and the end. Desire is not exhausted but rather increases with the getting. Dr. Tagore asks : "How then is one to come to the end of work ?" That is the problem which India has attempted to solve in her fourfold scheme of life, while according to the conception of the West, there is only the chase, but no game.

The successful completion of the Conference of Living Religions in London marks an important landmark in the history of world thought. It appears from a short report of the proceedings of the Conference just to hand, that throughout the Conference (lasting a fortnight) there had been a total absence of controversy. Many of those who attended the Conference had had an opportunity of hearing the basic principles of the great living faiths from men who believed in those faiths. The Conference had borne witness to the spirit of broad-mindedness and tolerance which had made it possible for men possessing the most divergent creeds to meet together on a common platform and to give each other a fair hearing. Sir Denison Ross, the President, spoke, I think, the barest truth when he said that the Conference had been in the nature of a League of Religions aiming at spiritual peace, just as the Conference at Geneva had for its aim material peace. A feature of the Conference was the reading of lessons from the Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures and the *Koran*. There was also a valedictory address and benediction from the Ahmadiyya Khalifa whose conclusion was : "Kipling is mistaken ; East is East, and West is West, but the

twain have met to-day," a remark which evoked the approval of all present.

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Intellectual Co-operation :—Dr. Hugbury Wright of the London Library has brought before the League of Nations at Geneva a scheme for what he calls a "Sub-Committee on Intellectual Co-operation." He proposes to publish under the auspices of the League of Nations, a short list of books limited to six hundred entries representing the best literature of the world in all departments of knowledge. Dr. Wright contends that if the nations are to draw together into closer intellectual contact, such a list would greatly help to that end and make it possible for one country to get acquainted with the thoughts and standpoints of another country. We agree that the League of Nations should actively help in this great project.

A. S.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PRIMER OF WATER-HEALING, Rs. 1-4-0 ; NON-VIOLENCE IN HEALING, Rs. 1-4-0, by Mr. Lakshman, Pondicherry.

These are books on Nature-healing, that is, a drugless method which Mr. Lakshman pleads for the prevention and treatment of diseases, and they consist in the proper use of sunshine, pure air, cold water and fasting. We have already noticed similar publications by the author on these subjects and the books under notice are an amplification of this method of combating disease.

THE WONDER CHILD (A sequel to FLOWERS AND GARDENS), by C. Jinarajadasa. (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. 1924).

This is an exposition of the Vedantic doctrine that the *Jivatma* which the author calls the 'Wonder Child' is an emanation from the *Paramatman* (Divine child) and yearns to return to its home. The great secret is that each Wonder-child looked forward to the day when the Divine Child would come to him, to lead him back to the Home of Light which he had left to serve the Light. On that day the Divine Child and the Wonder-child would become the Ineffable Light. The descent into the darkness and all the long struggles to overcome it were worth the discovery of that great secret which the ages had held for the Wonder-child.

A. S.

NEWS AND REPORTS.

Srimat Swami Shivanandaji, the President of Sri Ramakrishna Mission, who has been in the South for the last eight months, leaves Madras for Bombay on the 7th January. He will be staying at our Bombay centre for some weeks, after which he will leave for Calcutta.

The announcement made by Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archæology in India, of the discovery of a very ancient civilization in the Punjab and in Sindh has evoked the keen interest of scholars. Students of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities like Mr. C. T. Godd and Mr. Sidney Smith, who have examined Sir John Marshall's report, find a very striking similarity between the relics that have been dug up at Hosappa in the Montgomery district of the Punjab and in the Larkhana district of Sindh, and objects that have been commonly found at Susa and on Babylonian sites, dated about 3,000 B. C. The similarity is very marked both in the seals and pottery that have been unearthed, while the ritual symbols inscribed are so closely alike as to lead one to the conclusion that there must have been close contact between the peoples of India and of the Sumerians of 3000 to 2000 B. C. How desirable is the further exploration of the Indus valley in the light of even the little that is now known will be manifest to all who are in any way interested in the origin and development of Indian civilization or in the assessment of the full influence on the evolution of Asiatic culture.

The death of Dr. S. Subramania Aiyar which we have learnt with the greatest regret, deprives India of one of her best sons, best in every sense of the term. He has passed away full of years and honours, having earned the approbation of Government and enjoyed the fullest confidence and esteem of the people. He lived a full life. The earlier years of his notable career were devoted to the service of his country. If his splendid achievements in that sphere have evoked admiration and earned the respectful thanks of a grateful public, the years of his retirement and seclusion were no less remarkable. The beauty of his secluded life at Guindy was illumined by a quiet contentment. When the Swami Vivekananda first came to Madras, Dr. Subramania Aiyar was one of the first to recognise the greatness of the Swami. Dr. Subramania Aiyar encouraged the Swami to cross the seas to go to America. Dr. Subramania Aiyar also discovered the late Mr. P. Subramania Aiyar, whose High School in Mylapore owes its existence entirely to his efforts. The Trustees of the P. S. High School and Charities cannot better honour the memory of the founder and his revered friend and master Dr. Subramania Aiyar than by taking early steps to give the School a habitation which it so much needs, and enlarging the scope of the institution.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

" Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

" Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ' I am the Atman.' "

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE GREAT MASTER

TOTA PURI

SWAMI SARADANANDA

(Continued from Page 124)

AS Brahmani had told the Master, Tota with all his rigorous, life-long celibacy and austerity had but an extremely queer notion about God-devotion and the path of Bhakti. He could never understand how love and devotion could teach man to abnegate all comforts and pleasures of his life for the sake of the Beloved, nay, how it could teach even to give up all idea of self-enjoyment, and ultimately might bring about even God-realisation. He could not believe how a true devotee by dint of his pure selfless devotion alone could attain the pure Absolute Knowledge of the Jnanin. And so he had not much respect for such devotional practices like worship and prayer which form indispensable aids to a Bhakta's life, and not unoften he used to ridicule the emotional effusions of a Bhakta. But let not our readers conclude from above that he was an atheist and had no regard for the Supreme Being. Tota through his complete self-mastery and self-discipline attained that inner serenity and placidity of the

soul which is called *Shanta Bhava* according to the Bhakti school, and naturally he could understand only that aspect of devotion in others. But how a devotee by force of imagination could worship God in the sweet relationship of father, mother, friend, son, or the beloved husband, pour out all his heart's tender emotion at His feet, and thereby draw himself up to His divine Self, could never enter into his brain. And all the sportive displays of love that naturally arise from those *Bhavas* as we notice them even among the human relationships of love, such as the pang of separation from the beloved (*Viraha*), wounded pride through love (*Abhimana*), intense longing, and also such outbursts of emotion in dancing and singing or weeping, that characterise the depth and force of the stirring, surging feeling of the devotee, Tota used to consider as nothing but the workings of a morbid mind, and he could never imagine that such a devotee could ever reach the giddy height of the transcendental beatitude of Brahman. So, naturally, there often used to be a clash between him and the Master while talking over the devotion towards the Divine Mother Who is no other than the Divine Energy of Brahman Himself.

It was customary with the Master from his very early days that both morning and evening he used to clap his hands and take the holy names of the Lord like 'Hari bol,' 'Hari bol,' 'Guru Hari,' 'Guru Hari,' 'Govinda.' 'Govinda,' 'Krishna my mind,' 'Krishna my life,' 'Krishna my intelligence,' 'The world is in Thee, and Thou art in the world,' 'I am the machine, Thou art the mechanic,' and while uttering these he used to dance also sometimes with the stirring of feeling. He continued to do the same even after the attainment of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi through the practice of Vedanta Sadhana. One day he was sitting by the side of Tota Puri at Panchavati and talking with him on various spiritual topics and it became dusk. Noticing the approach of the evening the

Master stopped his conversation all on a sudden and began to utter the names of the Lord in the aforesaid way clapping his hands. Seeing him doing so Tota must have thought within himself how absurd it was for one who was such an excellent *adhikari* like Sri Ramakrishna who could attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi within three days' exertion, to behave thus like an ordinary low type of a devotee. He could not contain himself, he burst out in ridicule, "Well, why are you beating the *rotti*." . . In Northern India rustic people prepare a kind of bread called *rotti* with their own hands without taking the help of a roller to spread it. They take a small quantity of dough and put it on the palm of one hand and strike it with the other, and thus by such continuous striking of both the palms, the lump is evenly flattened into the shape of a flat cake, which they put into the oven for baking. So Tota ridiculed the clapping of hand of the Master by comparing it with that process of preparing bread.

Sri Ramakrishna laughed and protested saying "Forsooth, I am uttering the name of the Lord and you are calling it the beating of bread." Tota Puri also laughed at the reply ; but perhaps he might have understood that there must be some deeper significance of this action of the Master which he could not detect at that time. And he thought it wise not to contradict the Master in this action of his any more.

It so happened another day that Sri Ramakrishna was sitting by the side of the sacred *Dhuni* at Panchavati and talking with Tota Puri. Both Tota and the Master were so deeply absorbed in their spiritual talks, and their minds were in such an exalted plane that they did not notice one of the servants of the garden coming and taking fire from the *Dhuni* for his *chhilum* for smoking. But in the middle, all on a sudden, Tota's eyes fell upon the man, he was very much agitated at that act of desecration and almost threatened to beat the man with his long tongs. It has already been mentioned that Nagas consider the

fire of the *Dhuni* as most sacred and they think it a desecration to touch it without proper worship and veneration.

The Master could not contain himself to see this loss of temper of Tota over such a trifling matter and burst out into a roll of laughter. Tota could not understand him and enquired the reason of such curious behaviour of his, he asked, "What makes you so wildly laugh? Don't you see how bad it is of the fellow to touch my *Dhuni*." The Master smilingly replied, "True, but it amuses me to see the extent of your *Brahmajnanam* ! Just now with this very mouth you were saying that there is no other thing existing except Brahman, that all men and things of this universe are but different expressions of the same Brahman, but the very next moment, forgetting all those truths, you are rushing to beat that man. So I am laughing, thinking of the mysterious influence of *Maya* even over the mind of a *Jnanin*." The words went home into the heart of Tota. He looked serious, pondered over the truth of the utterance within himself, and then slowly spoke to the Master, "You are right ; I forgot the supreme truth in my rage ! Anger is indeed a great defiler ! From today forward I will never be angry, I am banishing anger absolutely from my heart." And true to his resolve, from that day forward Tota was never seen to be angry on any occasion.

The Master used to say "The Brahman weeps caught in the meshes of the five elements,"—you may close your eyes and loudly proclaim there is no thorn, no bramble, and however you may attempt to strengthen your mind with such assertions, but the moment your hand falls upon the thorn and bramble, you cannot help feeling the pain of the prick and withdraw your hand from it. So however you may teach your mind that you have no birth, no death, no vice, no virtue, no pain, no pleasure, nor hunger nor thirst, that you are bereft of all the miseries

of death, disease and old age, that you are the immutable, eternal Satchidananda Atma,—but when this body falls into the grip of ailments, when the mind yields to the magic sway of sense-pleasures, and per chance being decoyed by their temptations it commits mistakes in life and falls into the slough of despondency, grief and sufferings which naturally come in the train of sense pleasures, then all those glorious mental visions of the transcendental *Atman* get reduced to nullity, all that intellectual conviction evaporates away, and you find yourself no better than a tiny straw crushed under the clashing events of life. So know it for certain that no one can ever attain the Atma Jnana, that transcendental peace and beatitude of God-realisation which means the absolute cessation of all miseries of life, without the grace of the Lord, unless and until His Maya opens the gate for you and gives you the way. Have you not read in *Chandi*, *Saysha Prasanna Varada Nrinam Bhavati Mukhtaye*—Unless the Mother opens the door for you and shows you the Path, you can never get an entrance into that Realm.

“ Rama, Sita and Lakshmana are going in the forest while in exile. The forest path is narrow, only one at a time can walk over it. Rama with his bow is going ahead, Sita is following next ; next goes Lakshmana behind Sita. The devotion of Lakshmana for Rama is so great that he wants to have a constant look of the beautiful form of Rama, but Sita is in the middle, screening the view of Rama, so while walking and not being able to get the full view of Rama, he grows impatient and longs to see Rama. Intelligent Sita perceives Lakshmana's grief and out of great compassion for Lakshmana she stands aside for a while giving him an opportunity to have the full sight of Rama. Lakshmana sees Rama, his Ishtam to his heart's content and Lakshmana bathes his eyes with His Heavenly beauty. Just so between the Jiva and God there is this Sita-like Maya.

She feels at times compassionate towards the grief of the Lakshmana-like Jiva, stands aside for a while and allows the latter to have a view of the Lord Rama. So, know it for certain that unless She shows Her grace, there is no chance for the Jiva to see his Lord and get emancipated from all the miseries and bondages of life. Otherwise, any amount of ratiocination and intellectual logomachy won't help you in any way to get the redemption. There is a common saying that one grain of aniseed can digest hundred grains of rice but when one suffers from diarrhœa even hundred grains of aniseed cannot digest one grain of rice—this is also like that ! ”

From the very time of birth Tota Puri was a favoured child of the Divine Mother. He was favoured from his very childhood with good tendencies, a sincere and artless mind, a good physique and the company of holy souls. Up till then the Divine Maya never showed Her all-consuming terrific form of death to him, nor did She embroil him into Her whirlpool of seductive Ignorance (Avidya), so naturally Tota found it quite easy to realise the Supreme Being and attain the Nirvikalpa Samadhi by his own self-exertion alone. It was not possible for him to understand that it was She Herself with Her merciful hands who removed all obstacles from his path and made it easy for him to realise the Highest ! But now, perhaps the time had come to make him realise this fact, and so She brought about the change of events which we are going to narrate below.

(To be Continued)

SWAMI SARADANANDA

CLASS TALKS

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

OUT of the formless the formful has come into being. By formful existence we mean the universe, for this universe is a universe of innumerable forms. But it has come into existence out of the infinite One, which is the formless One. Now every figure has one or more boundary lines and what has boundary lines must be finite. How then can this formful existence, which is finite, come out of the formless, which is infinite? For we have just seen that out of the formless have come all these forms. The great Sri Ramakrishna used to tell us that such things are not impossible. This whole world of the senses is made up of formful things, but the memory of them is formless. Physical phenomena are always formful, but ideas cannot be formful. Even according to Western philosophers, every idea is formless or "unextended," as they say. For instance, there is a cat there and I see it. I look again and it is no longer there, but I remember that it was there. Now that memory, that idea of cat is formless.

In my mind is all that I have been tasting, touching, smelling, seeing, hearing and doing since my birth. But this mind of ours is said to be atomic in its nature. This is the view of many schools of philosophy. Kapila, for instance, as well as Nyaya, says that the mind is atomic. It can think of only one thing at once ; it can never think of two things at the same time. An atom is that which cannot be divided, and the mind is atomic because it also cannot be divided, and all that is indivisible must be formless. Hence memory, being in the mind, must be formless. In my memory furthermore are stored up all the impressions of all the lives that I have been living from time without beginning—not only of this universe,

in which I am living now, but of many universes which existed before this universe was created, for the chain is endless. Just as a wave rises up and goes down to rise up once more, so this creation rises up, goes down and rises again.

This is how this creation has been going on from time without beginning ; and since I am a denizen of this creation, I too have been going on from time without beginning, for no Hindu philosopher will hold that *Atma* was ever created. So long as this creation runs on, I also am going on with it, because I am a part of it. So in this mind are existing all the memories of all these creations. All the big things as well as the small things are existing in this mind ; and since what is in the mind must be unextended, all these memories must be unextended and hence formless.

Then once more the question rises : “ How out of formless existence has formful existence come ? ” Now if our ideas are formless, then since everything comes out of an idea, all forms come out of the formless. For example, you want to build a house. You have an idea, a formless idea of a house, next you draw this out on paper, and at last you build the house, which has definite form. In the same way, out of the formless idea of creation have come out all these formful entities. There cannot be two infinities, for in that case one will have to limit the other ; so there must be one God, there cannot be two, and out of Him must have come all this universe, and ultimately it will merge into Him. But He is formless. Formless means infinite, as well as that which is infinitesimally small. Therefore in our Scriptures the same God has been described as smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest. How can these two things be applied to the same God ? Yet it is a fact. You know that extremes meet ; extreme cold, for instance, has the power of burning.

What is the definition of God ? God is one, He is absolute unity. And that which is absolutely one must have to be unextended. Why ? Because extension is always the distance between two points. You cannot form any idea of extension without two points, one here and one there. Extension rests on the idea of here and there. Since therefore every extension is between two points, the idea of extension presupposes two. But by the definition, God is absolutely one, one without a second. He is homogeneous, elementary, simple in His nature ; so He cannot be two. Besides God there is nothing. He is all God, all spirit. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that sugar candy is sweet everywhere ; you may bite it above, below, on this side, on that, but everywhere it is equally sweet. Similarly God is the same everywhere. If then the idea of extension is based on two and God is absolutely one, He must be without extension. In that case He must be a geometrical point, which as described by Euclid, has neither extension nor magnitude. He is then smaller than the smallest. But at the same time He has no boundary line and what has no boundary line must be infinite. Hence where there is no extension, that must be a point of infinity, and thus we see that God is both smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest. These you must have to conceive within yourself. When a man disentangles himself from the gross body, when he disentangles himself from the subtle body and when he disentangles himself from the causal body, then only can he realize his true nature ; and then he finds that he is pure existence, consciousness and all-blissfulness. All these are one and the same. They are not three different entities. When the idea of existence is there, there is consciousness ; and because you love to exist, so the idea of happiness or bliss is also there. One cannot remain without the other two.

This can only be realized by a man who goes beyond all limitations. Man is not really so fragile, so weak as he

imagines himself to be. But for this little machine of a body the universe would not exist. But for man there would be no universe. A sleeping man looks a dead body, but the man is inside ; still it is a fact that the legs cannot walk, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear. But although he may not be in the legs, he may not be in the eyes or the ears, yet he is there somewhere inside the body. Nevertheless, while he is sleeping, his wife may be lying by his side, but he is forced to forget his wife ; and not only his wife, but the whole universe, his own body and his own mind even. That he has gone away from all the Indriyas is a palpable fact, for he does not see, hear, act or remember. Thinking, feeling and memory are the functions of the mind ; seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching are the functions of the sense organs, walking, talking, working with the hands are the functions of the organs of action. But since he does not think, feel or remember, see, hear, taste, touch or smell or act, it is evident that he has gone away from all the Indriyas. And not only from them, he has gone away from the very memory of the universe. When he is awake he can remember, though he may not think or see or act. When he falls asleep, however, he no longer even remembers. Only when the man comes back to his mind, he begins to remember the universe ; when he comes back to his senses, he begins to perceive the universe ; and when he comes back to his body, he begins to move about and act. The universe was there when he was sleeping, but only when the man lives in his senses and his mind can the universe exist for him. And if he does not exist in his mind and senses, not only the universe but the memory of it does not exist for him.

Thus we see that this machine of the body and the mind is the most wonderful thing in the entire creation, for it is the prop on which the whole universe is resting.

“ Days and months are passing away, summer and winter are passing away, still man thinks that he will live

for ever and is building all sorts of airy castles." So our philosophers say, there is no knowing when death may overtake us, this life then must be very precarious; and if this life and body are so precarious, how much more uncertain must be that which is resting on this body! How precarious therefore is this universe which is based on the body! What constitutes the universe? Wife, children, money, name, fame. These make up the universe of nearly every man.

But you must go out of your body every twelve hours *nolens volens*, for you are driven out by sleep. This shows that you do not really own this body. If you did, you could do what you pleased with it. As a matter of fact, however, this body has not come to you out of your own choice; for if you had selected your own body, would you not have taken one that was beautiful and healthy and to your liking? Then if you have not been able to choose, the body must have been given you by some one else. And who is that? God. He is then the proprietor of this body. It belongs to that Power which moves us whichever way It wills without regard to our choice. None can gainsay that Power. He is irresistible. Having a body which I cannot call my own; having an egoism which is a slave to that Power, for I have not my will against It; when I thus study my environment and my own condition, I see that I am not free. Every creature is bound hand and foot. None can withstand that Power.

Then what are we to do? I resent it if any one calls me a slave and I retort, "Your father is a slave." Yet when I look at myself, I cannot deny that, although I do not like slavery, still I am a slave. Then what must we do? Our greatest struggle must be to get out of this slavery. To do this there are two ways. One is, we can make friends with that Power. He is so vast that He says of Himself in the *Gita*, "Only on one portion of Myself this little garden of the universe is grown."

If you want to be free, you can satisfy and please Him. How to do that ? Well, you can obey Him. Nearly all the men of the world are fighting against that Power ; like little ants trying to pull down the Himalayas. A little ant, having drunk some toddy, becomes intoxicated and thinks it can pull down a mountain. In the same way the whole world has become mad drinking the liquor of illusion. We take ourselves to be so great, whereas in reality we are zero, if not a *minus* something. Yet we are always quarrelling with God. I have lost something and I find fault with Him. One whom I love dies and I blame Him. I am not satisfied with His dispensation and I feel that I could govern much better than He. Such is the attitude of all the men of the world towards that Power.

When, however, I have been able to understand that I am nothing, I go to Him and say : " Oh God ! Take this body ; it is not really mine, it is Thine. Take this mind ; it is not mine, it is Thine. Take this soul ; it is Thine. Take this soul ; it is Thine, not mine." Every day I am calling this body mine, but what do I do ? I mix a little rice with soup and throw it into the mouth. But do I know to manufacture it into blood, bone, muscle and tissue ? Has any scientist ever been able to manufacture a drop of blood ? Do I know how the food is digested or how it is carried by the blood or how the lungs breathe ? No. What we are doing is really the cooly's business and there is an architect inside who directs all our movements. When food is wanted, he makes it known in the form of hunger and something solid I must get, if I beg, borrow or steal. A little water is wanted, he makes it known in the form of thirst and I must find fresh water. And what do I get for it ? I eat something and the sense of refreshment again brings me a little pleasure. It is for that you are doing all this cooly's business. But know your own position. Know that you are only coolies obeying God's commands, then that mad-

ness which is the cause of all your miseries and which makes you forget God, or even say there is no God, will leave you. Then when God sees you recognizing Him as the Master, He will become a most loving Master.

Almost all men of the world have usurped the throne where God should sit. On that throne where God should be, a most worthless slave has been given place. That is the ego. When you know this, then drive out the ego. When you do this and become the slave or servant of God instead, you will realize your eternal nature. Join yourself with God. Heretofore you have been joining yourself with your wife, your children, your relatives and friends. But when you will realize that God is your real relative, that He is your father, mother, friend, then you will go to Him ; and as a relative of a Brahmin must be a Brahmin, so a relative of God must be God. Being one with God, all fear of death will go, peace will come to you and you will taste true *Anandam*. So the moment you unite yourself with God, you will realize that you are *Satchidanandam*,—that eternal life, all-knowledge and all-bliss are yours.

The path which I have been describing to you is the Bhakti-marga ; but there is another, the path of discrimination, which is not altogether opposite to Bhakti. In this path a man begins by discriminating what is eternal from what is non-eternal and he finds out that all is non-eternal in this universe. Then he asks, Who am I ? I am Mr. A or Mr. B. But Mr. A. and Mr. B. must be born and must die, while I am not born, I do not die ; therefore I cannot be Mr. A. or Mr. B. Then he finds out, " Since my body dies and is born, while I who am a dweller in the body, am birthless and deathless, then I must be separate from the body and all these titles,—that I am a Brahmin, the son of Mr. So-and-So, that I am a man or woman, rich or poor,—cannot belong to me. Hence this ego cannot be the same as myself. Am I then

the mind ? No : the body is an instrument in my hands, so is the mind. I am distinct from both body and mind. ”

When the man who is following this path sits down to meditate, ideas come to him and he says, “ I am not these ideas, for they are inner phenomena in no way different from outer phenomena and I am beyond all phenomena. ” Then he gives up the action of the legs, he closes all his *Indriyas* and he goes back to his mind. Here a very terrible struggle is before him. This mind which has been pampered through millions and millions of births will not be controlled. But where there is a will there is a way. If he has determination and perseverance, in the end he will succeed, but it cannot be done in a day. He must have to practise persistently. Then he should have no desire for sensual enjoyments because he has analyzed the whole universe and found it wanting; he must be beyond all enjoyments.

This is the other path ; but in this a man must struggle by himself. Therefore Sri Krishna says : “ A man must meet all sorts of perils in this path, so it is better to take refuge in Me. ” If an ignorant man tries to drive an engine, you know how dangerous it is ; so say to God, “ I do not know how to run this engine, please, God, do Thou do it for me. ” Why should you try to run this machine of a body when you can place it in the hands of a perfect driver ? Let God drive the engine. Say : “ Lord, I am incapable of running this machine of body and mind ; do Thou do it for me. Come and occupy the vacant throne in my heart. I will never again pollute it by my presence. Do Thou take it, Lord. ” When a man can thus surrender himself completely at the feet of the Lord, then God steadily leads him to the land of bliss.

FLOOD RELIEF

SWAMI GHANANANDA

(Continued from Page 308)

THE relief workers should advise the recipients to procure, as far as possible, baskets, spades, and other things required for cooly work. And the maistries, overseers, and engineers can be requested to choose coolies from amongst the strong and sturdy recipients. Such an arrangement can provide work only for a comparatively few. The large majority of them may have to wait until working conditions which are disturbed by floods are restored. In times of flood, boatmen's earnings will be handsome enough. Many caste labourers also will get cooly work in repairing houses, etc. But a large majority consisting mainly of the lowest classes, will be without work for some days after the floods, as conditions will have been upset. Cultivation will be impossible for some time, or may be too premature. Days after the floods, such work as the watering of fields and gardens, repairing damaged houses, cultivating, manuring or harvesting grains like *cholam*, *kambu*, or *ragi*, weaving, road and bridge repairing and so forth will become more and more available. When a clear or large majority get the work with which they can shift for themselves, food relief should be completely stopped. Is it not advisable for the *charka* which is much spoken and written about to be introduced among the unemployed by such organisations as can take up that work? This will not interfere with the work of the relief parties in the field.

The sub-centres in an affected area which are to work on the model of the chief-centres must be asked to send weekly reports to the chief centre which will in turn send a consolidated weekly report for publication to the Head-quarters of the number of villages served, number of recipients helped, quantity purchased and distributed, and such other details as may be required.

The flood relief has been described here rather elaborately as what is expressed may serve as a guide also in times of famine relief.

A flood relief party will not at all be justified in continuing food relief for a single day more than it is absolutely necessary for alleviating the distress caused by the floods. It should not disturb the general and normal conditions of life.

The same systematic and well-ordered work can be done also in clothing the destitute. In this, too, as in feeding, a relief agency should begin with the lowest classes and extend help gradually to as many flood-stricken of the deserving higher classes as possible. Villages and hamlets can be clothed one by one. Duplication can be avoided by the distribution of tickets. Informations as to name, caste, sex, and as to whether the recipient is an adult or not, can be taken down, suitable clothes given and entries made in a register. In the report for clothing relief, the number of villages served, the number of men, women (married or widows), boys and girls clothed, their caste and other details can be furnished. The recipients can be asked to bathe properly in a river or elsewhere and be given oil and soap to clean themselves with and asked to put on caste marks if they are Hindus. The clothes can be distributed after this is over. This will serve as a practical lesson to them in cleanliness and the formation of good habits. Cloths new or old are to be used. Old cloths collected outside an affected province cannot be so useful to the flood-stricken as those collected in it, as the kinds of dress used by its people may be different from those used by the inhabitants of other provinces. All old cloths must be quite thoroughly washed, as otherwise there will be the danger of diseases spreading amongst the recipients and from them to their neighbours.

A more permanent part of the relief than feeding and clothing is housing. A fresh list of those families which require it may have to be made. Professional house-builders build their huts themselves. A few of the huts may have been deserted and the owners may have gone away for ever, or only for a time, to return after the general distress is over.

As housing will cost much, a relief party wanting to do it can appeal to the Government for aiding it with a free grant of timber, bamboo and other materials. Usually a poor non-caste man will require and be contented with a few headloads of leaves, some headloads of bamboos and a few poles. Some of the lowest classes may require walls also to be built for

them, if they are incapable of making them themselves. Caste-men will require and ask for better and bigger huts than those of the low classes, and so their cost also will be higher. A relief party, however, must set a limit to what it should spend and try not to give more than the quantum already fixed. As Government takes time for making any arrangement by going through its wonted formalities, a representation for the free grant of materials should be made as early as possible after a flood. Often a free grant may not be very valuable as the relief party which asks for it may have to spend a considerable sum of money for cutting and carting the granted materials from the Forest Reserves to the house sites ; but every effort can be made to avail of a free grant whenever convenient and profitable.

The floods are often a blessing in disguise, as they afford facilities for building the houses on higher and better sites in well-ordered formation and in perfect accord with sanitary laws. The Fire of London was a similar blessing in disguise. It is the supreme duty of a relief agency to make arrangements with local men or the Government for procuring new sites on a higher level unaffected by the floods and to urge as many of the flood-stricken as possible to remove and build huts on them. In many places where the floods have occurred once, they have occurred again and washed away the houses built after the first flood. In Canara, in Assam and other parts of India, this has been the case. It is the duty of the people as well as the Government to see to it that no delay is caused in procuring good sites wherever possible, as otherwise the people will be building on the old. If they are not provided with higher sites in a month or two after a flood, they may be unwilling also to move from their old places. The psychology of their refusal is evidently this : for a few weeks since the flood, they will be terribly afraid of living in their old huts which may have entirely collapsed or partly damaged and so they will put up temporary huts on the ground of some landholders. After some time, they will find that for various reasons, like the unwillingness of the landholders to allow them to continue to live on their ground, the insufficiency of the temporary huts to protect them well from the sun and the rain, and the general disgust for their original idea of moving to the new sites, caused more or less by delay, if any, in procuring them, it will be better to build on the old sites. To

prevent them from doing so, the following measures can be taken :—

(1) The relief party should expedite the arrangements for new sites.

(2) It should convince the people strongly that it will try to make arrangements for getting sites.

(3) It should work in co-operation with the important Government officials who have influence with the people.

(4) It should hurry up the building of a typical village or two on new sites in perfect order and cleanliness in order to attract the people to new sites.

(5) It should bring home to the minds of the uneducated and unreasonable the great need for moving to the new sites by persuasion and by telling them about the dangers of rebuilding on the old sites.

(6) It should threaten to refuse help to those who do not allow themselves to be so persuaded.

(7) By dissuading those who build on the old sites earlier and independent of any help from doing so, lest they should be emulated by the others.

The difficulties in bringing the people round will be greater in the case of the lowest classes, though they may crop up even in the case of caste men. No admonition, however, will be needed for those for whom it is better to build on the old sites.

Once a new site is obtained on a higher level and a whole village (or most of its inhabitants) is willing to build on it, a good plan must be made on which to lay out the plot chosen. This has to be done in consultation with a Revenue Inspector or a Tahsildar. A plan according to which all the streets are parallel and run perpendicular to the road is perhaps the best. The site for each low caste family may be about 4 cents. All the houses should be built in a perfect line. The streets may be ten cubits or more in breadth ; the backyard of one row of houses may meet the backyard of another row, if there are several rows ; and so also the frontage of one row the frontage of another. Some space, say about 2 or 3 cubits, can be left out from the border of each man's site and the walls built in straight lines both lengthwise and breadthwise. This will keep the houses separate and will be found useful in times of epidemic or fire breaking out. There must be

symmetry between two rows of houses and between two blocks in which several rows stand. Equal interspaces should be left out between one house and another. Seedlings of some palm, like the cocoanut, may be planted all around a village, a few yards away from the house sites in regular order, as in a few years they will grow into a fine beautiful grove surrounding the village. For such ornamentations, money from the public subscriptions need not be taken.

A good site is one which is not only high and unaffected by the floods, but also one in which there is facility for getting water near by and the soil is good for wall-making, and which is not far away from the roads. The village temple can be built on a suitable position to which all the huts can have easy and convenient access. It is better to ask the people themselves to put up roofs wherever possible before the walls are complete, lest the rain should wash them away. For those who can manage to build walls somehow or other, they should not be made at the cost of the relief party.

In suitable cases of families, a good deal of help can be rendered by relief agencies working in unison with co-operative credit societies. Should the families be unable to pay even the initial share capital, the relief agency working in the area can make a free grant of it in *toto* or in part. Co-operative Housing Societies also can be started wherever necessary and possible.

It is a pity that the lowest and so-called untouchable classes of India suffer most for want of sufficient co-operation from the rich and influential caste men. A relief agency should do its work with great love and sympathy for them in a spirit of absolute disinterestedness, and render help to the deserving flood-stricken of all castes and all religions. It will betray a great lack of culture and large-heartedness, of the sweetness and light of life, if it confines its relief to the people who belong to its own religion.

Relief parties must provide themselves with common medicines which will be useful to them in times of illness. They should also equip themselves with printed tickets, statement forms, etc., to facilitate work and avoid delay in beginning it.

It is better for a relief agency to begin work in an affected area where relief has not been administered by any other. If it however desires to work in an area where another is already

at work, it should do so after full consultation with the latter in order to avoid overlapping which entails waste of public money, and make divisions of area and such other desirable arrangements.

The workers must be frugal and cautious in spending money from beginning to end. Short distances of three or four miles can be walked by a healthy worker and conveyances need be arranged only for longer distances. A bandy is to be preferred to a jutka, and writing communications to typing them, if the latter is not cheaper. Personal expenses should always be kept down to a minimum. Detailed accounts should be maintained and vouchers taken whenever possible.

Considerably heavy is the responsibility in opening relief throughout the affected areas. No work, whatsoever, feeding, clothing, or housing should be left off in the middle. The chief centres are to be informing the public through the Headquarters not only about the work that is being done but also about the exact conditions in the affected areas, the probable future requirements and so forth. Several thousands of rupees may be required for relief operations if the affected areas are very extensive. A central office in the Headquarters will have to work vigorously, to collect money to supplement its own if need be, disburse it according to requirements to the various chief centres in the affected districts, be in constant touch with them, keep regular and strict accounts, and finally get them audited and published. All difficulties and obstacles, however great, can surely be surmounted with indomitable will, untiring energy, strong faith and deep love for a noble cause.

SWAMI GHANANANDA.

COMMENTS AND CRITICISM

Indian Oriental Scholars held what should be regarded as a very successful session in Madras during December. The Conference should, in the course of things, have been presided over by that eminent scholar, Sir Ashutosh Mukerji, whose death last year, which we deplore, has deprived this country of a great supporter of arts and science.

It is appropriate that one of the early meetings of the Conference should be held in this Presidency. As observed by Dr. Macphail, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Madras is the meeting place of three types of cultures, the Aryan, the Semitic and the Dravidian and the study of the interaction of these cultures in the history of Indian thought should be fruitful and of valuable results. The present ferment in the country which competent observers have characterised as an Indian Renaissance, while making a critical study of the past has not failed to take account of its bearing on the developments of modern culture.

The scope for research is immense and the field unlimited. The study of inscriptions has no doubt made some progress but even spade work has not been done in the field of Archæology. The excavations at Mohenjo Daro which we noticed in these columns the other day have opened up a new vista and have pointed out the possibility of a close contact in civilization and culture between the primeval civilizations of the world. It is now proved beyond all doubt that somewhat about 3000 B. C., the people of Summeria, Arcadia, Babylon and Sindh had lively commercial and cultural intercourse with each other. This one fact has enabled us to revise many of the accepted theories as to the age of Indian civilization. We are encouraged to hope that further research will bring to light material which should prove of inestimable value in the construction of the history of this ancient land.

These researches should prove of equal value for the solution of present-day problems. The perfect organization of the Indian village system has evoked universal admiration. The root idea of the village system has been traced by Oriental scholars to the *Vedas*. The development of the village organization through successive ages and its adjustment to changing conditions, while having that original structure and frame work intact, is a lasting tribute to the genius of the Vedic Rishis who organized the village system. That in spite of the vandalism of the East Indian Company, it has to a great extent preserved its character

and has in some degree conduced to the happiness and enjoyment of the people of this country, should encourage present day reformers in the reconstruction of the villages.

These aspects were well stressed in the admirable opening address of His Excellency Lord Goschen. The scope for research is immense and who can deny that the result will be full of significance as Lord Goschen and the President Mahamahopadhyaya Ganganath Jha pointed out. Till recently the charge was levelled against Indian scholars and quite justly we think that Indians owed their knowledge of ancient Indian History and institutions to the labours of western scholars. But thanks to impulse originally given by Dr. Bhandarkar, the great Bombay Orientalist, and the labour of the band of scholars whom the versatile savant Sir Ashutosh Mukerji gathered around him in Calcutta, the reproach can no longer be levelled against Indians. The valuable work of Dr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar and others so far as South India and Dravidian literature are concerned is already bearing fruit. But a good deal remains to be done if we are to be enabled to write a connected history of the ancient Southern Indian Kings.

There are other lines of research. We have pointed out how the merest digging of a site in Sindh has provided information which bids fair to revolutionise all modern conceptions regarding the antiquity of Indian civilization. "Meteorology has not even been attempted ; Astronomy has been barely touched. Similarly, Medicine and Chemistry have been worked just enough to become inviting subjects of research. In Law very little has been done. Dramaturgy and Poetics in general have just begun to be studied. In Philosophy much has indeed been done. But very much more remains to be done. In Nyaya-Vaisheshika and in Purvamimamsa all that we have done has been pure spade-work ; in the domain of Kashmirian Shaiva Philosophy, even spade-work has not been done. On the inter-relation of the several philosophical systems, there are many inviting problems still unsolved."

The field is so vast, and vast materials have yet to be unearthed. Unfortunately with a solitary exception, there is no organization in this country for carrying on continuous research work. It is more than twelve years since an earnest attempt was made by the Government of India to establish a central research institute in this country, but the scheme has not yet materialised. Since then however we have had a research institute established at Poona, which even during its brief existence has more than justified itself. This and the Post-graduate Department of the Calcutta University which we owe to its late lamented Vice-Chancellor, Sir Ashutosh Mukerji, are by no means suffering from a plethora of money and even Oriental scholars have to live and be kept above want if they are to carry on research work.

Here in Madras the Oriental Manuscripts Library which was doing excellent work has virtually ceased to function. It is however somewhat reassuring to know that the Government of Madras have recently appointed a committee to frame rules for the working of the Library, "with a view to providing facilities for the utilisation of the manuscripts, as also for the acquisition, preservation, restoration and publication of manuscripts."

Interesting and suggestive as several of the papers read at the Conference are, the chief value of such conferences lies in the fact that it serves as the occasion for scholars and fellow-workers to meet and exchange, the value of which cannot be over-estimated.

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Writing on the Social Value of Arts and Crafts (*The Theosophist*, January, 1925), Dr. J. H. Cousins enquires 'what is the purpose of art?' At the lowest level it is for the giving of pleasure; at the highest it is a means for putting the individual in harmonious relationship with the larger life of which he is a part. Out of this non-mystical mood has arisen the concrete, naturalistic art of the West with its pleasure in the slightly exalted reproduction of the familiar beauty of form and appearance. In the mystical mind of the East Dr. Cousins sees art as both a means of invoking the God without and invoking the God within. To put it in the author's own words: "It seeks to get the individual not merely in touch with the extra-world but with the supra-world. It contemplates beauty as a quality of the cosmic personality which is shared by every cell in the body of God, to wit, the universe including humanity; and it sees a picture as both a reflection of the universe, external or internal, and as an aid to the better because more beautiful fulfilment of one's duty and the consequent attainment of liberation from the lower degrees of life in the flesh into the freedom of the life of the spirit. Beyond these complementary ideas, as beyond the varied qualities of creative art itself, glimmers the promise of a future unified Philosophy of Beauty." A beautiful conception beautifully expressed.

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In the *Occult Review* for January, 1925, Meredith Starr writing on 'Rational Mysticism,' says that the true mystic, the rational mystic is one who can recognise and harmonise the worlds of realism and idealism, and make a wholeness of them, not a separation. In fact the whole secret and process of mysticism is and has been from time immemorial the getting rid of the sense of separateness. "However small or low or mean or outcast we may appear to be in our individual aspect in the world of appearances, we have behind or within us, as it were, the other pole of our being; the infinite potentiality of the

transcendent and inconceivable richness and fullness, and glory, and ineffable bliss of the eternal and immeasurable perfection of the one life in its absoluteness." In order to arrive at this stage, the author thinks that the mystic has need to follow the occult path ; also in his opinion both the mystic and occult paths are only complementary, and both are necessary for our full development, for the mystic is mainly concerned with Being—the consciousness side of Reality, while the occultist is mainly concerned with Becoming—the Substance or Form side, and that much of what is ignorance and a matter of faith in the mystic, becomes intelligible to the occultist, "thereby increasing the latter's sense of the illimitable wisdom and grandeur of the cosmos, not only as regards its life, but also as regards its structure."

We admit that the principles which both the mystic and the occultist have in common are (1) the identity of the individual with the Absolute in the totality of his nature, and (2) the belief in an unbroken continuity of life. Freedom, that is Freedom from illusion, from separateness and union with the Transcendental Whole is the goal of both the mystic and the occultist. Where we are unable to follow the author is when he lays stress on the occult path for the realisation of the goal.

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Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Khaira Professor of Indian Linguistics in the Calcutta University, writes an informing paper in the *Modern Review* for December, 1925, on the Dravidian Origins and the Beginnings of Indian Civilization. He controverts the theory which now holds the field, namely, that the Aryans, some two or three thousand years before Christ, branched off from their home in Central Asia, that bands of them went west to Europe and became the ancestors of Celts and Italians, Germans and Slavs and Greeks, and that other bands came down south into Eastern Persia, whence one group came to India, bringing the light of civilization and organisation. "The earlier inhabitants of India, barbarians if not actual savages, offered some resistance, but they submitted to the superior Aryans and accepted their rule. Then the wise men of the Aryans, the Brahmans, after the conquest of Northern India had been effected and the barbarians had been enslaved and civilized, gradually evolved the religion and system of society known as Hindu. The nobler element mostly came from the Aryans ; and whatever was dark, vile and degrading, superstitious and cruel, was naturally the outcome of the non-Aryan mentality." Quoting Bishop Caldwell and certain other European scholars, Dr. Chatterjee comes to the conclusion that the non-Aryan—Dravidian—had a high standard of culture, independent of the Aryan, and relies in support of the theory on the recent Mohu-jo-Daro excavations inaugurated by Mr. R. D. Banerje. He advances the theory that these

non-Aryans—Dravidians of Sindh—seem mostly to have been conquered and Aryanised in course of time—perhaps long before Alexander the Great. He adds that “with our present evidences, the Dravidians look like a Mediterranean people coming out of Crete, and passing through Asia Minor and Mesopotomia where they were in close touch with the Sumerians and Elomites ; and possibly these latter were related to them and the Cretæns. Then they came by the southern part of the Iranian plateau into Sindh, whence they spread into the interior of India. This must have happened long before 3,000 B. C. ” He expresses the hope that further discoveries might demonstrate that the Sumareans were but Dravidians from India, and in that case, it could be established that civilization first arose in India, and was associated probably with the primitive Dravidians, and that it was taken to Mesopotomia to become the source of the Babylonian and other ancient cultures which form the basis of modern civilization.

We are afraid that the author is too much obsessed with his Dravidian theory to test it in the light of facts brought out by later research. He has not adduced incontrovertible evidence to show that the Dravidian civilization is anterior to Aryan civilization. It may be assumed that the Dravidian civilization of Southern India was taken to Mesopotomia, but that is all that can be said in support of the theory advanced by Dr. Chatterjee. The author unconsciously perhaps falls into the error of supposing that the Dravidian civilization dates from Neolithic Age, because of some unique features such as the burying the dead in a crouching position in terra-cota coffins. He should note that in the *Rig Vêda* reference to the burying of the dead is made in more than one place. Later researches than those referred to by the author show that the Aryan civilization flourished in the Punjab at least 3,000 years before Christ.

A. S.

THE ASCENT OF VALUES

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B. A. B. L.

FACTS are related to the soul only through the relation of values. From the physical and mechanical point of view the world is a mere dance of atoms ; but from the point of view of the soul, it is a cosmos of values. Evaluation is in relation to the will. Our preferences determine the inner world as surely as causal forces determine the outer world. Nature can never be studied independently of the inquirer, for inquiry necessarily involves the inquirer.

Generally values are determined by desires. In the realm of economics this is always so. Diamonds are more valuable than pebbles because human beings desire the former for self-adornment and the supply of diamonds is limited while pebbles are not desired and their number is unlimited.

But there are not only temporary relative values but also permanent relative values. The things which are the objects of steady and continued desire and are necessary for the functioning of the soul have a higher value than other things. Light, air and water may or may not have an economic value according to their availableness or unavailableness in plenty, but they have certainly and at all times got this higher value.

The next rung in the ladder of values is that of absolute and universal values which are more intimately connected with the will of man than the values above indicated. Our ideas of duty, justice, truth, and beauty belong to this higher order of values. If our consciousness consisted of a discontinuous series of isolated flashes of experience, this higher order of values cannot exist. Upon the continuity of our consciousness and of our self-awareness of identity of personality depend the fundamental directions of evaluation.

In this higher realm of universal and absolute values, there are various important aspects. We have first of all the values of being. We realise the existence of the objective and the subjective worlds, of nature and personalities, of things and persons. The inter-connections of these form a realm of values. History is the connection of persons just as nature is the connection of things. In nature's causal series there is only sequence ; but in the case of wills there is union.

Quite as important as the values of being are the values of beauty. Unity in variety and variety in unity—this is the first great law of art. Harmony is the perfect adjustment of unity and variety.

“ Fair is the swan whose majesty, prevailing
O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's lake
Bears him on while proudly sailing
He leaves behind a moon-illuminated wake. ”

By these lines the poet creates in us the harmony of peace and brightness and unity in variety. Love is the harmony—nay, fusion—of wills : Love is the joy of self-realised harmony. The unity of love brings the unity of happiness. Happiness is the bright point of touch where truth and beauty meet. In art unity shines out as beauty. Painting and sculpture and architecture reveal this realisation of joy in harmony in the world of repose. Light reveals it in the realm of action. Music reveals it in the realm of inner emotion. Art is selection, detachment, isolation and recombination for the purpose of better realising happiness through unity in variety. The bust does not require the addition of legs and feet or the colour of the skin. We do not want to get a personal introduction to Beatrice or Laura. Keats has well described the view-point of art when he says :—

“ Bold lover ! lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal, yet, do not grieve ;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love and she be fair. ”

The selections of art from the chaos of experience are of a different character from the selections of science. Science amplifies experience while reducing it to order. The microscope shows millions of atoms where the eye sees only a drop. Art simplifies and interprets while selecting. One stroke of painting reveals a spacious landscape and invests it with a new significance to the soul. The artist's lines and lights are calm to the eye but they stir the soul. Literature reveals the inner unity of multitudinous wills. The poet reveals to us the real unities of life. His rhythm of utterance is only the verbal shadow of the harmony of unity in variety. The sculptor and the architect deal with the unities of lines, straight and curved ; the painter deals with the spatial unities of colour ; the poet deals with the time-unities of articulate sound and the psychological unities of thought ; and the musician deals with the time-unities of pure sound and the psychical unities of emotion. The joy of the unforeseen exquisiteness of happiness in harmony is more in music than in any other fine arts.

The ethical values are even higher than the values of art and govern the latter. In nature's causal series man is but a speck, an atom ; but in himself, in relation to other human beings, and in relation to God he is infinite in possibility and achievement. The vibrations of his conduct travel far and wide. He is capable of infinite self-development and ethical achievement.

But the final summation and transvaluation of values is in the realms of philosophy and religion. These reveal to us the mysteries of creation, revelation, and salvation. The unity of all values is in God ; in Him is the reconciliation of every variety—often seemingly mutually opposed—of value. Religion shows to us the unity of values. It is in the Oversoul that we realise the all-inclusive unity and consciousness and joy (*Satchidananda*) to which all lower unities lead as the rivers lead to the ocean.

Hugo Munsterberg says well (though with a veiled contemptuous and probably envious sneer) in his book called *Eternal Values* : "The wonderful people of India with their early flagging energy have unfolded their best powers in their religion ; pondering and dreaming, through four thousand years they have transformed those fundamental thoughts always new. It was the belief that the things are only an illusion, the suffering only an appearance, the evil only a misinterpretation. All the true being is spirit, and in devotion to the pure spirit all truth, all happiness, and all morality necessarily flow together. The elimination of the opposition of values is here gained by an entirely new turn of thought. The opposition is overcome by recognising the world of opposition as an illusory world, but the ultimate meaning is, after all, in the turn of the Indian thought the same as in all other religions of world-influence. . . . The true world of India is eternal and immutable. Every becoming is only an illusion."

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Foundations of National Reconstruction

WEAKNESS OUR BANE

IF only we had more strength !—That is the cry that goes out of every heart that ponders over the prostration of India. Why is it that Hindus and Mussalmans cannot unite, spin and wear khaddar or feel the miseries of the millions of untouchables ? The one answer is—we are weak ! Weakness is our bane. India is a very old nation hoary with experience. It is not therefore want of wisdom that has blinded and paralysed her. She has surfeit of philosophy. Any honest programme of action is good enough for us provided we carry it out. But it is exactly there that the difficulty arises. We are weak—we get out of breath before we have advanced a few steps; and instead of recognising this primal cause of failure, we begin to find fault with the Ideal. There is unnecessary waste of energy and progress is set back.

Our first duty then should be to make ourselves strong. Acquisition of strength, individually, socially, nationally should be in the fore-front of our programme. For though it is true that any good scheme of work is good enough for our purpose, yet the practical difficulty arising out of our present decadence, requires the greatest amount of national attention to be devoted to that purpose. But it is regrettable that up till now no national programme has emphasised that point. All schemes take for granted that we are powerful enough to bring them to fruition, only to discover sooner or later the national incapacity to rise up to the required level. The question now is whether there cannot be a plan of work which will fulfil this our supreme need and at the same time ensure the greatest economy of time and energy. We hold that Swami Vivekananda has given us such a plan, though the country has not yet properly appreciated and accepted it. The signs of the times are however propitious and it is not too much to expect that ere long circumstances may force us to welcome it as the only solution of our difficulties.

What is wanted is a change of heart (to quote an oft-repeated phrase) on the part of our workers,—their very outlook of humanity must undergo a change. If the Himalayan task of the national reconstruction is to be accomplished, then a store-house should be discovered from

which we can draw inexhaustible energy required for it. In all conscience, our country is miserably prostrate,—and yet even in this prostration, we must discover strength, in this darkness, see light. Verily a new vision must dawn upon us ! It is of this new vision that Swamiji was the prophet !

THE VISION OF THE DIVINE IN MAN

Swamiji approached the problems from quite a new angle of vision. His one idea was how to make *men* of us. He felt that if only the nation gains strength, all the various complex problems that now vex her will automatically be solved. His one idea therefore was to emphasise and hold up those aspects of our life which conduced to our growth. He could never tolerate looking at the negative side of things. He proclaimed the inner divinity of every man, however base or sinning he might appear to the world, and he exhorted us to make that truth to bear upon every detail of our life. It was characteristic of Swamiji that the very fact of sitting near him could inspire a man with the revelation of the unconscious purpose of his life, imparting value and meaning even to the most insignificant details of his experience. The secret of this miracle lay in Swamiji's own personality being like a devouring flame of love, recognising no evil and knowing only the Divine in all things. Do we not remember that ringing challenge that he threw at the assembled thousands at the Chicago Parliament of Religions ?—"Children of immortal bliss—what a sweet, what a hopeful name ! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss,—yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners ? It is a sin to call a man so ; it is a standing libel on human nature." This was indeed a very bold challenge thrown at the face of Old Thought. But a message of great hope withal ! That man is potentially divine, is no news. But it is the undying glory of Swamiji,—for in the history of humanity he is the first to make this declaration—that he asserted that man even now as he is, is divine. He did not recognise evil, for as he once said, what we call evil is only an imperfect vision of good. Once he wrote of himself to a friend that at twenty he was an uncompromising fanatic, refusing to walk on the footpath on the theatre side of the streets in Calcutta, but now at thirty-three, he could live in the same

house with prostitutes and would never think of saying a word of reproach to them. He then asks, Is it degenerate ? Or is it that he is broadening out into the Universal Love which is the Lord Himself ? And then he says, " I have heard that if one does not see the evil round him, he cannot do good work.—I do not see that. On the other hand, my power of work is immensely increasing and becoming immensely effective. Some days I get into a sort of ecstasy. I feel I must bless every one, every thing, love and embrace everything and I do see that evil is a delusion. "

This non-recognition of evil is a tremendous fact, for it at once changes the whole outlook of life. Then man stands on the supreme fact of his divinity, and a wonderful change comes over him ; he gains in self-confidence, and faith works miracles. Whatever he wants to become, he becomes. All achievements become easy for him. For faith in oneself begets wonderful strength and strength can reach up to any height. " Blessed are the strong, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven and also of earth. " It is this faith—faith in one's infinite power that Swamiji sought to be awakened in the heart of our countrymen and to that end enjoined our youngmen to go out into the villages, to preach the message of the Divine in man to our masses, to tell them that they have infinite power within themselves if only they would believe it. This was the main plank in the Village Reconstruction Scheme of Swamiji. Thus said he :—

"Our poor people, these down-trodden masses of India, require to hear and to know what they really are. Aye, let every man and woman and child without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind every one, there is that Infinite Soul assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good. Let us proclaim to every soul—Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, awake ! Awake from this hypnotism of weakness. *None* is really weak ; the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him ! "

HOW TO UNLOCK THE DORMANT ENERGY

This is the secret Swamiji has imparted to us of unlocking the unlimited power that lies sleeping within the souls of our millions. And unless *it* can be awakened—and there is no other way of doing it than by what Swamiji prescribes—

the preaching of man's inner divinity to our people—no amount of men and money poured into the villages can achieve any lasting good. The villagers themselves must regain their self-confidence ; then they will of their own accord right their wrongs. Industries will revive, sanitation will come back to our dilapidated villages, economic conditions will be stabilised, and the country will smile in plenty and prosperity.

WHERE ARE THEY ?

But where are the young men ?—those blessed ones for whom Swamiji cried once in the agony of his heart : “ What the world wants to-day, is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder, and say that they possess nothing but God. Who will go ? ” They, alas ! are not forthcoming ! For mere patriotism will not do. They that will wake up the consciousness of the Divine in others, must burn with that faith themselves. Few, very few indeed are they ! When will the nation respond to the call of this its first duty ?

If national work is to be fundamental, if reconstruction is to be solid and durable, this should be made the very first item in the scheme of work. *First, a band of young men with tremendous faith in their spiritual self, and then the broadcasting by them of the message of the inherent Divinity to the masses. In fact the realisation of this item of work will automatically take us to the very door of an all-round national emancipation. Without that nothing will be accomplished.*

This again—the collective awakening of our people's inner divinity—is also, according to Swamiji the way to the Hindu Revival. We do not countenance the idea that in order to facilitate communal harmony Hindus should stop organising themselves. Let us for once understand that so long as Hinduism has not become self-conscious, and therefore organised, communal harmony itself will remain unrealised. We, Hindus, do not know ourselves. Very few amongst us can declare what his religion really stands for. Each sect claims to be the representative of Hinduism and quotes enough verses from the Scriptures in its support. How then can Hinduism, a mere aggregate of exclusive sects form treaty with other religions ? The paramount duty therefore, of all Hindus is to realise their religion as an organic unity. It is regrettable however that in spite of the Hindu

Mahasabha, little of serious attention has been given to that consideration.

ORGANISATION OF HINDUISM

Swamiji held that it is in the doctrine of the soul that all the different sections of Hinduism can be made to reconcile themselves and brought to a sense of organic unity. Says Swamiji in one of his lectures in Madras :—

“ It is easy to find out the way of reconciliation that will not hurt the dualist or the qualified monist. There is not one system in India which does not hold the doctrine that God is within, that Divinity resides within all things. Every one of our Vedantic systems admits that all purity and perfection and strength are in the soul already. According to some this perfection sometimes becomes, as it were, contracted, and at other times it becomes expanded again. Yet it is there. According to the Advaita, it neither contracts nor expands, but becomes hidden and uncovered, now and again. Pretty much the same thing in effect. The one may be a more logical statement than the other, but as to the result, the practical conclusions, both are about the same ; and this is the one central idea which the world stands in need of, and nowhere is the want more felt than in this our own Motherland. ”

This doctrine of the inherent divinity of every being is the core of Hinduism—all else is but inessential. Let us lay emphasis on this fundamental, and Hinduism will become self-conscious. Round this core our religious ideas should crystallise. On no other basis can our religion regain itself or establish amity with other religions. This is the golden link holding and systematising all human efforts. Swamiji held that Hinduism should give utmost prominence to this its essential doctrine and relegate the non-essentials, the thousand details of customs and traditions, rites and ceremonies, to the background. He wanted Hinduism to go back to its primal source, the Upanishads, and remodel herself after their universal Ideal.

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS

Hinduism professes to stand on the authority of the Vedas. Yet what now passes for Hinduism, if closely examined, will appear to be a conglomeration of ideas having little or no connection with that authority. Especially non-essentials—the rites and ceremonies and traditions.—which are almost wholly responsible for the disorganised state

of our religion—are mainly *lokacharas* and *deshacharas*—local conventions. Yet the average Hindu firmly believes that those very things are the very soul of his religion. During his wanderings all over India, Swamiji found to his surprise that Hinduism was no longer the Vedic religion,—its place had been usurped by a heinous creature, 'the Popular Custom.' In one of his writings, Swamiji funnily describes the present-day Hinduism as a "towering temple with many ways of approach, containing within it everything from the Absolute Brahman to the minor gods and goddesses, and millions of people rushing towards it. None however went inside, their worship was done to a standing figure by the side of the door, with fifty heads, a hundred arms, two hundred bellies and five hundred legs—the god of gods—named 'the Popular Custom.'"

Therefore we must go back to the Upanishads. Each section must revise its ideas and beliefs in the light of Upanishadic truths and assuredly narrow sectarianism will vanish. For, as Swamiji has shown, there is no real difference in essentials among the several schools.

THE SUBTLE CAUTION

Here, however, we must sound a note of warning. Though the rites and ceremonies are non-essentials, they are not unnecessary. Rather they are indispensable for all who practise religion. There is therefore the danger of killing religion itself in the name of liberalising it. The subtle caution required to organise the essentials and non-essentials of the different schools of Hinduism cannot be acquired *until and unless one has practised religion*. It is not through mere good intentions and intellectual understanding that the organisation of our religion can be attained. Through perfect spiritual knowledge alone that achievement is possible. And so far, history has produced only one man who gained that perfect knowledge. It is Sri Ramakrishna. And until and unless we follow in his footsteps, the desired unity will never be an accomplished fact.

Swamiji therefore asked all Hindus to concentrate their attention on the fundamentals of their religion—the doctrine of the Divinity of man. This is what he meant by Practical Advaita. In this he found the supreme remedy of curing all our national ills; and this was his supreme gift to his nation.

Even a child knows that without strength, nothing can be accomplished. *But that by its very efforts at attaining to strength, the nation will simultaneously solve its problems, is a truth which only Swami Vivekananda discovered for us.*

We invite our readers to deeply ponder over his words.

REVIEW

LIFE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA : ADWAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI, ALMORA, HIMALAYAS. Price, Board Rs. 5, Cloth Rs. 6-8-0.

The Mayavati Adwaita Ashrama has just brought out a comprehensive life of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna. The plan followed in writing the book is well calculated to be very helpful to the average reader. The materials have been carefully gathered from all available and authentic sources and arranged in a narrative form without going into any philosophical explanation or interpretation. This method of biography has both its advantages and disadvantages, especially when the subject happens to be of such national and spiritual significance. In the Life of Sri Ramakrishna, of which the first two volumes have already been published by ourselves under the name, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, a different line of treatment has been adopted, making it both interpretative as well as narrative. The volume under review covers the whole of the Master's life and his relations with his chief disciples, making up altogether an entrancingly beautiful book of 768 pages. Uptill now, no complete life of the Master was available to the non-Bengali-knowing readers, and assuredly the present publication will go a great way to fulfil that deeply felt want. The book is prefaced with a short foreword by Mahatma Gandhi. The style is delightfully simple, lucid and restrained, and the get-up excellent.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The sixty-third birthday of Sri Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in the Madras Math on Saturday, the 17th January, with special Puja, Bhajana and distribution of *prasadam* to the assembled devotees. The public celebration came off on Sunday, the 25th instant. A full report of the same will appear in our next issue.

The Report of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, for the year 1924 :—

We have great pleasure in reviewing the twentieth annual report of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, for the year 1924. The most important feature of the year is the addition of a separate block of buildings for the Residential High School costing nearly a lakh and twenty-five thousand rupees. Magnificent help has been done in this connection by the Nattukottai Nagarthar Community, famous for their charity and munificence. Though not quite complete, yet, the institution had the good fortune of getting the benediction of a formal opening at the hands of His Holiness Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, the revered President of the Ramakrishna Mission, on the 12th December, 1924.

The strength of the institution rose from 109 boarders at the beginning of the year to 125 at the end, of which 89 were pupils of the Residential High School, 29 were College students, and 7, students in vocational courses.

The school is recognised for Forms IV, V, and VI for the Madras S. S. L. C. Examination, recognition for the Lower Forms being under consideration of the government. Provision is made for manual training and professional study by compulsory attendance in one or other of the vocational classes in Carpentry, Rattan Work, Knitting, Tailoring, Weaving and Smithy. Chairs, tables, almirahs, stools ; trays, flower-baskets, mats and boxes ; dhoties, towels, twils, bed-sheets and carpets ; socks and banians ; shirts, coats, and trousers are the various articles produced.

We are glad to note, judging from the results of the examinations, that the pupils have shown hard work and efficiency in their studies. Out of eleven candidates for S. S. L. C. Public Examination seven were declared eligible for admission into colleges. Two came off successful in the second class in the B. A. (Hons) Examination and four in the B. A. (Pass). Four out of five passed the Intermediate. In the

school all, except a few, were duly promoted to higher classes and six pupils have appeared for the Lower Grade Examination in Cotton Weaving held in last November. Of the boarders twelve were Government scholars, eight held college scholarships and four were recipients of scholarships from the Mahratta Education Fund and the Naidu Sangham.

The financial condition of the Home, so far as it has been able to meet the requirements of the scheme already worked out, can be said to be fairly satisfactory, though in order to complete the scheme chalked out by the management a large sum of money is still needed. The receipts by subscriptions, donations, interests on deposits and other items amounted to Rs. 30,103-2-6 ; and the expenditure on the maintenance of the boys and the establishment was Rs. 21,312-0-6. Rs. 19,154-8-0 were added to the Permanent Endowment Fund raising the total to Rs. 87,556-1-3. On school account (including the building fund) a sum of Rs. 88,937-8-0 was received and Rs. 80,674-8-2 expended. The amount invested in the school building up to now is Rs. 88,278-4-9. The balance at the end of the year was 74,116-12-0. The urgent needs of the institution are the quarters for the members of the staff for effective supervision of the boys and a Permanent Endowment Fund of five or six lakhs for ensuring the future financial conditions of the Home.

The public is already familiar with the ideals and methods of training adopted by the institution and the fair amount of success that it has been enabled to achieve by their active sympathy and co-operation. We earnestly hope that they will extend their help and charity in a still larger measure in the future to make the institution a complete success. All subscriptions may be sent to the Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Student's Home, Mylapore, Madras.

* * * * *

With deep regret we record the passing away of Mr. C. F. Petersen an August 18th. He and his wife were associated with the Vedanta Society of San Francisco almost from the beginning of the Vedanta movement on the Pacific Coast. They worked with, and helped the Swami Turiyananda and Swami Trigunatita in carrying on the work.

They took Swami Trigunatita in their home and maintained him until the Society grew and the Temple was built.

Mr. Petersen served several times as president of the Society and was one of the trustees for years. He spoke little but tried to live the life of an ideal house-holder. He was a man of great sincerity and sterling character and was loved by all. At his loss the Society is deprived not only of a good friend, but an active worker such as can seldom be replaced.

* * * * *

As notified in our last issue, Srimat Swami Shivanandaji reached Bombay on the 12th of January, accompanied by Swami Sharvanandaji. On his way, he stopped for two days at Cuddapah at the invitation of the local Sri Ramakrishna Samaj. A correspondent writes :—

The President of the Samaj, Mr. W. Samaiah Garu read an address of welcome in the gaily decorated premises of the Samaj. His Holiness Swami Shivanandaji made a brief but touching reply, in course of which he said that the principle which was established by the life and teachings of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was that religion is a matter of actually being and becoming spiritual. He expressed great satisfaction at the keen interest the people of the town were taking in religion. Swami Sharvanandaji then addressed the audience and said that the Samaj had the proud privilege of having under its roof the great Swami Shivanandaji owing to some peculiarly fortunate circumstances which would not ordinarily occur. At 10 in the morning Swami Shivanandaji opened a library called the "Siripuram Veeraswamiah Library." During his stay for two days in Cuddapah, Swami Shivanandaji was visited by almost all the leading people of the town including women and children. The Swamiji blessed them all and gave suitable spiritual advice with "prasadam."

On the evening of the 8th, a public lecture was given in the premises of the Samaj by Swami Sharvanandaji on "Spiritual Life."

In another lecture delivered on the evening of the 9th the Swamiji showed how Spirituality has to be applied in practice. This was a very impressive lecture and the audience heard with rapt attention.

On the morning of the 9th a shrine room was opened by Swami Shivanandaji in which was placed an image of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The Swamiji made pooja and sanctified the image.

The Swamiji left Cuddapah on the night of the 9th by the Raichur Passenger. A large number of people bade farewell to the Swamijies at the Railway Station.

At Bombay Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj was presented an address of welcome by the Western India Vivekananda Society at a public gathering representative of all religious communities, held on Friday, the 16th January evening at the Marwadi Vidyalaya, under the chairmanship of Mr. M. R. Jayakar, President of the Society. In welcoming His Holiness, the chairman referred to his excellent work in several parts of India and Ceylon and said that in Ceylon and Southern India his name was a household word. Mr. G. P. Murdeswar then read the Address of Welcome. Swami Shivanandaji replied to it acknowledging the love of the gathering and thanking them for

their welfare, and called upon Swami Sharvanandaji to address the assembly on the message he intended to convey to the people of Bombay.

Swami Sharvanandaji then spoke nearly an hour, explaining the ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission,—the harmony of religions and the universal brotherhood of man,—ideals which are more needed in India to-day than anywhere else. Modern India, he said, was no longer the India of Hindus alone, it was not the India of Mahomedans alone; it was the India of Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis, Christians, Jews, etc., all combined. It was foolish to talk of the superiority of one's religion to that of others. He referred to the recent utterances of Maulana Mahomed Ali and said that when they heard of such an utterance from the lips of a leader, what could they expect from the unlearned and illiterate fanatics? If the different religious communities only realised that the various religions were so many approaches to the ultimate Reality, and that it is the life of purity, love and service that mattered and not mere professions, they would not break each other's heads as they did at present.

Mr. G. K. Devadhar then spoke for a short time and moved a vote of thanks to Swami Shivanandaji for readily responding to the invitation to come to Bombay.

Swami Sharvanandaji delivered a lecture on the "Goal of Life" on Wednesday, the 14th January, at the Marwadi Vidyalaya, Bombay. He is at present delivering a series of lectures in English and Hindi, in different parts of the city. All the lectures are being very well attended and highly appreciated. The subjects of his lectures are: (1) Hinduism and Untouchability, (2) Soul of Hinduism, (3) Religion as a Force of Union, (4) God, Soul and Matter, (5) The Plan of Social Reconstruction, (6) The Spirit of the Caste System, (7) The Secret of Worship, (8) Work as Worship, and, (9) Secret of Death.

The Ninetieth Birthday Anniversary of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on Tuesday, the 24th February. The *Tithi Puja* will be celebrated on that day. The public celebration comes off on Sunday, the 8th March.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

" Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

" Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ' I am the Atman.' "

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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THE TRUE SELF OF MAN*

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

MAN is restless ; not only man, but every living being throughout the universe is restless. Why ? Because man is hungry and thirsty by nature and must have to earn his living by the sweat of his brow. That is why he is restless. If however you examine properly, you will be able to make out that hunger and thirst are not the direct cause of this restlessness. Man thinks that he is a person of innumerable wants. But that is only imagination. In reality he is wantless, infinite ; that is his true nature. Yet he imagines that he wants food, that he wants drink and all the things that make up this universe. Hence this universe is called *Annam*. *Annam* ordinarily means food for the stomach. But this is not the only hunger that a man feels. He wants food for his eyes, he wants food for his tongue, food for all organs of the body in which he resides.

Hunger therefore means want of food, want of anything. And it has been calculated that a man has thirty-three million wants. There are eleven organs,—five

*Notes of a Class Talk.

senses, five organs of action, and the mind, and eleven organs each have three moods,—the happy mood, the restless or unhappy mood, and the sleeping or lazy mood. When you are in a happy mood, whatever you see seems beautiful. In the unhappy mood, everything seems distasteful, even your wife, your children, your home. In the lazy mood you do not want to go anywhere or do anything but sleep. The eye that sees everything as beautiful in the happy mood, the same eye sees everything as distasteful in the unhappy mood; and in the lazy mood, it does not want to see anything. You are, as it were, three different gentlemen. The happy gentleman is not the same as the unhappy gentleman and the unhappy gentleman is not the same as the sleeping gentleman.

Then count your optical desires. You want to go to the north to see Benares and to the south to see Rameswaram; you want to go to an art gallery to see fine pictures and to a garden to see rare plants. See how many things you want to see. You cannot even articulate them. So eleven organs multiplied by three moods make thirty-three million, or innumerable desires. A million here is used in the sense of innumerable. As these desires are so many hungers. Who can satisfy them all? Can any man? Even if you go to an emperor, can he satisfy them? No; only God can put before you a dish to satisfy these innumerable hungers and this dish goes by the name of the universe.

Now when God puts this dish before you, there must be servants to serve it. As in our feasts there is always one man who serves the rice, another who distributes the curry and another who passes the sweet-meats, so God has many servants to distribute the food at His feast. Those who give us the good things go by the name of gods: those who give us the bad things go by the name of demons. And as there are thirty-three million dishes to satisfy our thirty-three million hungers, so there must

be thirty-three million gods to serve us with all we want. And they are constantly satisfying our desires. All our optical desires, all our auditory desires, all our gustatory desires, in short, all our desires find satisfaction in this universe. It is the one big dish to our satisfaction, and there is always a being serving it.

This is how we think when we analyze the universe superficially. If we think, with the scientific men of the West, that we are born with our birth and die with our death, then our analysis is the best : this universe is a great banquet hall, where the gods are servants and we are all hungry people. But it may be asked whether we are in this banquet hall of the universe as beggars or His guests. We are not His guests. Why ? Because we have egoism in us. If we were His guests, there would be some relationship between us. We only invite those people with whom we are related either by blood or by friendship. So if you are a guest of God, you must be a son, or a brother, or at least a friend. But do you feel yourself to be that ? You may wear a *Namam* on your forehead, but when you put it on, do you feel that you are related to Vishnu ? No ; you put it on because your father has taught you to do so. It has become a sort of fashion to put on the *Namam* ; but that does not mean that the man loves God. If he is a real lover of God, he will not show it. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that if a man covers himself with all these religious marks, he looks like a signboard telling people that there is so much piety here for sale, just as a shop-keeper puts out a sign in front of his shop. A real devotee, however, will never care to be a shop-keeper ; he will wish to stay, not in a shop, but in the temple.

When therefore I ask myself whether I am related to God as a son to father, or as servant to master, or as friend to friend, I am forced to

confess that, I do not feel that I have any faith in God. Many even doubt the existence of God. If you believe in the existence of God as you believe in the existence of your wife and children. You will have to admit that you have no real faith in God. And without faith how can you establish relations with Him? Until you get that faith you cannot say: "Thou art my father, Thou art my mother, Thou art my friend and companion; Thou art my learning, Thou art my wealth, Thou art my All-in-All, my one Lord."* Since, therefore, you are not related to God, you have not come here as His guest. You have come as a hungry beggar to satisfy your hunger.

There are many people who think that God is a useless idea; that without God the universe would go on better; that it is religion which has unmanned us; and they say, "See how much money is wasted in building temples." When men become so ignorant, so blind as to believe in all these things, then God thinks it is time to teach them a lesson, so He sends famine or plague or earthquake. You know the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel. At that time there was only one language in the world and people had not to waste their time in learning so many languages in order to make themselves understood; so they could do many other things and they became very strong. Finally they said: "If we combine together we can do all things very easily; and if by combining together we can do so much, then why need we ask the help of God?" So they began to build a gigantic tower from which they could jump into heaven. When their vanity carried them so far, a mysterious power confused their tongues; then when a man called for mortar, his fellow-labourer did not understand him and when another asked for bricks, no one knew what he said; so the work was brought to an end.

*This invocation is recited by a Hindu in course of his daily prayer.

This is what happens when vanity raises its head. Now we think that we can do everything, that we have no need of any help. We think with our own body and our own mind we can accomplish everything ; and because of this wretched pride we forget our God. We do not even remember our fellowmen. If anyone tries to rule over me, how quickly I resent it ! When I cannot bear that any man should be superior to me, how can I entertain the idea of a God who is over me ? So when this vanity comes,—that with my books, with my science, with my mind I can do everything,—God says : “ Now is the time for Me to make My presence felt,” and He sends plague and famine to teach a good lesson to His children. Then when plague and famine come everyone begins to go to holy places and remember God.

To come back to our analysis: Before we accept the conclusion of the world being a banquet hall, and we so many hungry souls, let us ascertain if we are hungry at all. No one has ever asked this question except a few Indians. Every one is cocksure that he is hungry ; every one believes that he is three and a half cubits in length, and that he is born and that he dies. But we Hindus have found out that although we may be hungry apparently, our real nature is above all those thirty-three million desires, above body and above mind. Men in the modern West do not admit this. They take their real self to be identical with their body and mind. They think, “ What can we not do with our own strength ? ” So they, like the people on the tower of Babel say, “ Let us all join together and we can do everything.” Thus they have developed great powers of organization and co-operation and they have been able, no doubt, to bring many comforts to their bodies. But they have also multiplied their wants. A man can never be happy whose wants are many. He alone is happy whose wants are few, and he is happiest who has no wants. As Swami Vivekananda has said, the Hindu has solved the prob-

how little a man can live on, and the West, on how much a man can live. Thus in the West, having so many wants, people are never happy ; for these wants bring restlessness and restlessness kills happiness.

When a man mistakes slavery for mastery he makes the worst sort of blunder. They are making this mistake in the West ; but they are sincere and they want to know the Truth, and that sincerity will bring them to the Truth. Therefore many of them are beginning to understand our religion better than we. You do not know your own greatness. Although your fathers have given you the greatest religion, you do not care for it and try on the contrary to imitate the manners and customs of the West.

The question is, Am I really hungry ? Nowadays this question is not asked. But in olden days people asked : Is it a fact that I am hungry ? Is it a fact that I am three and a half cubits tall, am I really born and do I die ? But if I am but a mere dweller in the body, by knowing the body I do not know myself. I am in the house, I am not the house—the plaster, the rafters, the bricks are not a part of me. By knowing the house, I do not know myself. So if I am only a dweller in the body, what should be my characteristics ? Hunger is in the body. Eyes are a part of the body, ears are a part of the body, all the organs are a part of the body. But if I am not the body, then the eyes, ears, and other sense-organs are not in me ; hence optical desires, auditory desires, etc., are not in me.

Then who am I ? I cannot have any desire and if I have no want, I must be the richest and the happiest man in the universe. Then my duty must be to realize this fact,—that I am not the body or mind. As I am not this school hall, although I am in it, so I am not the body or the mind. Then if they do not belong to me, they must belong to some one else and I should not desire

another's property. My primary duty, therefore, must be to realize this, then I shall be perfectly happy, for I shall have no wants. And if I have no wants, I am perfect. Want always implies imperfection ; and if I am without wants, I must be perfect. If I am perfect, I am That, I am Brahman.

But though I may be intellectually convinced that I am Brahman, have I realized this ? It is no use saying "*Aham Brahmasmi*" when I have not power enough to support my wife and children. Then what are we to do ? God says there is only one way : "They only escape this Maya who take refuge at My feet." This Maya comes to us as wife, family, as name and fame. Man is tied to this Maya in the shape of wife, of stomach, of money ; and it is not possible to untie himself. So God says : "Man, do not be vain like the builders of the tower of Babel. Know that you can do nothing without Me. I alone can untie that bond which holds you. Come to me and I can set you free." When a man hears God's voice and realises that of himself he is powerless, he says : "Oh Lord ! Thou art infinitely great and I am nothing. Save me. Not mine but Thine will be done." Let that be your motto. And if you cannot have faith in God whom you have not seen, then go to a God whom you can see and such an one is the *Satguru* (the Illumined Teacher). Go to him, serve him like a menial servant and he will illumine you. He will lead you to God who has declared, "None else can save you, for I am the Lord of the whole universe."

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM*

C. D. SUBRAMANIA CHETTIAR, M. A.,

Principal, Government College, Coimbatore.

THE subject with which I am concerned to-night is 'Education and how Swami Vivekananda would have liked to get it reformed'. However much I may be unequal to the task of handling so vast a subject, I do not feel any hesitation in requesting you to reflect to-night over some of the Swami's opinions on this, because it is apparent from a study of his life and works that Education formed one of those subjects which were dear and near to his heart and one on which he again and again reverted as the thing, almost without which it would be impossible to do anything good in India. This conviction seems to have been borne in on him at the time of his meditation at Kanyakumari.

Again he reiterated this belief, this faith in education when conversing with a preacher on the need for the protection of the cow. "It is uncompromising, and I submit it deserves our attention here. I am a sanyasin, as you see, if people give me money, I shall best of all spend it in the service of man. I shall try to save men first by making provision to give them food, education and religion." This conviction grew in strength with the wider experience of the world he gained during his travels. "Let me mention one thing in passing," he writes to a friend in 1900, "namely, that Europe began to advance from the date that learning and power began to flow in among the poorer classes. It matters little whether rich men praise you or blame you, — they are merely the ornaments, the decorations of the country — it is the millions of poor lower class people who are its life."

He was never tired of writing about the importance of

*Extracts of a lecture delivered on the occasion of the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mysore, Madras.

education, and in a very elaborate letter to a lady friend he wrote in 1897, he says :—

“ From the day when education and culture, etc., began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilisation as of western countries, and the ancient civilisation as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, *i. e.*, by spreading education among the masses. A great fuss has been made for half a century about social reform. Travelling through various places of India these last ten years, I observed the country full of social reform associations. But I did not find one association for them, by sucking whose blood the people known as ‘gentlemen’ have become and continue to be gentlemen. How many sepoys were brought by the Musalmans? How many Englishmen are there? Where except in India can be had millions of men who will cut the throats of their own fathers and brothers for six rupees? Sixty millions of Musalmans in seven hundred years of Mahommedan rule, and two millions of Christians in one hundred years of Christian rule—what makes it so? Why has originality entirely forsaken the country? Why are our deft-fingered artisans daily becoming extinct, unable to compete with the Europeans? By what power again has the German labourer succeeded in shaking the many-century-grounded firm footing of the English labourer?

“ Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education, faith in one's own self, and through faith in one's own self the inherent Prahman is waking up in them, while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant.”

His definition of education and its purpose is very clear. In a letter written in 1900, he asks “what is education?” and his answer is, “Is it book learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education.” Now education is just one of those terms which all of us use like water and jus

because of its commonness perhaps baffles an adequate definition, and the definition just given is characteristic as coming from an Indian, and I would request you to remember this, because it explains part of his constructive proposals as well as his criticism of the system of Indian education he was confronted with and which does not differ in any very appreciable manner from the system of to-day.

His central criticism of Indian education is that it is a system of negations violently uprooting the educand's faith in himself and India and replacing it by nothing that can take root in him. "Now consider," he says, "is that education, as a result of which the will is being continually choked by force through generations :—under whose sway, why mention new ideas, even the old ones are disappearing one by one,—is that education which is slowly making man a machine ? It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong impelled by one's free will and intelligence than to be good as an automaton."

He referred to the same question before a Madras audience in an address on "The Future of India," and declared, "we must have a hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation. Do you understand that ? You must dream it. You must talk it. You must think it, and *you must work it out*. Till then there is no salvation for the race. The education you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or any training that is given to negation, is worse than death. The child," he went on to explain, "is taken to school, and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing, that his grandfather is a lunatic, the third thing, that all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth, that all the sacred books are lies ! By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless. And the result is that fifty years of such education has not produced one original man in the three Presidencies." This audience might not perhaps agree with the Swamiji regarding the chronology, and one or two steps might overlap, but the result indicated is one which the audience must feel

is true to facts. In passing may I also request you to remember that the appeal to India was conveyed through a Madras audience and it behoves us to satisfy ourselves by a certain amount of introspection as to what heed we have paid to his appeal, how we have understood it, how much we dreamt it, we talked it, thought it and above all worked it out ?

One of the terms he never tires of using in this connection is *shraddha* and his accusation of the present system of education is that it has killed it, or at least that under it, it has withered away. To its want he traces all the evils among us and attributes the springing up of new ones.

What then is the kind of education that he would have ? " Make men first " he says, " we must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. " A little later he states, " The ideal therefore is that we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practicable. " He refers to this topic again in discussing the marriageable age of girls and says, " By education I mean something in the line of positive teaching We want education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on his own feet With such an education women will solve their own problems. " Even at the risk of a little digression may I suggest that perhaps girls' education requires to be carefully looked into from this point, and before vested interests grow stronger—and those seem to have grown strong enough and are vocal enough even now—it behoves us to reduce to a minimum outside influences and make the organisation as Indian as it can be ? It is a delicate subject and perhaps requires a discussion rather than a paper.

" Well, Maharaj, " he was asked one day, " what is your idea of educating our boys ? " " *Guru-griha-vasah*,—Living with the *Guru* (Teacher) " came the reply. Who are to be the *Gurus* ? Here also the answer of Swamiji is emphatic. The *Tyagis* or sannyasins are to be the *Gurus*. The whole idea is elucidated in several places by Swamiji in his own powerful way, and I shall read out an extract from them. In the address on " Future of India, " he said :

"Of course this is a very big scheme, a very big plan. I do not know whether it will ever work out. But we must begin the work. But how? Take Madras for instance. We must have a temple, for with Hindus, religion must come first. Then, you may say, all sects will quarrel about it. But we will make it a non-sectarian temple, having only "Om," as the symbol, the greatest symbol of any sect. If there is any sect here, which believes that "Om" ought not to be the symbol, it has no right to call itself Hindu. All will have the right to interpret Hinduism, each one according to his own sect ideas, but we must have a common temple. You can have your own images and symbols in other places, but do not quarrel here with those who differ from you. Here should be taught the common grounds of our different sects, and at the same time the different sects should have perfect liberty to come and teach their doctrines, with only one restriction, that is, not to quarrel with each other. Say what you have to say, the world wants it, but the world has no time to hear what you think about other people; you can keep that to yourselves. Secondly, in connection with this temple there should be an institution to train teachers who must go about preaching religion and giving secular education to our people; they must carry both. As we have been already carrying religion from door to door, let us along with it carry secular education also. That can be easily done. Then the work will extend through these bands of teachers and preachers, and gradually we shall have similar temples in other centres, until we have covered the whole of India. That is my plan. It may appear gigantic, but it is much needed. You may ask, where is the money? Money is not needed. Money is nothing. For the last twelve years of my life, I did not know where the next meal would come from; but money and everything else I want must come, because they are my slaves, and not I theirs. Money and everything else must come; must, - that is the word. Where are the men? That is the question."

Nor did he appear at the time he was making the above statement that the difficulty of finding men of the type he was thinking of would be insuperable. "They had," he said, "hundreds of Rishis in ancient India. We will have millions... we are going to have, and the sooner everyone of you believe in this, the better for India, and the better for the world. Whatever you believe that you will be. If you believe yourselves to be sages, sages you will be to-morrow. There is nothing to obstruct you." Indeed so far as Swamiji was concerned he was convinced that Indian education could be uplifted from the present position only by *Tyagis*. "The

essential thing is renunciation,—without renunciation none can pour out his whole heart in working for others. The man of renunciation sees all with an equal eye, and devotes himself to the service of all."

The above extracts give us in as fair a manner as possible an indication of how the Swamiji would, given the necessary opportunities, have remodelled education. His ideas, broadly speaking, fall into two groups, (i) the agency of education, and (ii) the scope of education. The latter is one with which most of my profession will agree. There is a very widely current belief that the view-point especially in the teaching of literary subjects should alter more or less radically. While no teacher who is worthy of the profession would care to live in Indian ideas to the exclusion of the outside world, he would still feel that to-day he is more or less, however unconsciously, relegating them to a comparatively back place. The teacher himself is a product of the past, and there is an uncomfortable feeling I think in him that sometimes he cannot rise above his earlier influences. I submit

that there is a distinct change for the better, though one would like it was due not so much to reactionary or illiberal ideas masquerading under patriotism as to real progress characterised by the assimilation of forward ideas. All the same the change is there and in time truth will prevail. But this again is intimately bound up with the agency of education. We have seen already the characteristic definition of education by the Swamiji. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. This function of education can be successfully accomplished only if we can predicate a good agency. Our work as teachers is not anything like that of the man at the machine, who might and perhaps will be with the progress of science replaced by another machinery more suitable for the work than the man himself. The teacher is a most important factor in the work of education. Swamiji would work for, and is hopeful of obtaining, an agency of sannyasin teachers. The two points that demand consideration are : (i) whether such teachers are likely to be of much use, and, (ii) whether we can get an adequate supply of these. For my part, I submit that a seeker after truth and proclaimer

of truth has a great deal to gain from the position of a sannyasin, but opinion will be still divided as to whether it is not more necessary to get each and every man to be in his own way a seeker after truth and a proclaimer thereof, and whether we can afford to work for only or even mainly for a body of teachers who however admirable in their own way seem yet to lack some of that point of contact with the world in general. May I venture to say that his ideal of a sannyasin teacher comes as near as possible to the Jesuit missionary teacher in real life, and I shall leave this aspect of the question only requesting you to consider whether that organisation has not gained by its contact with other types of teaching organisations. The second point to consider is how far it is possible to bring into existence an organisation, however gradually, equal in size to the needs of the entire country, even granting that we take only the Hindu community into consideration. "It may appear gigantic," the Swamiji accepts, "but," says he, "it is much needed." My humble submission is that even in India it might not be possible to achieve this. What is and should be possible is to have institutions in select areas answering to these demands of the Swamiji and make them to serve as examples for other institutions which aim at the same goal though they might not take the same route. Indeed the present tendency in the world of education so emphatically aims at diversity of methods that it will almost look reactionary if we are to standardise our teaching agency*.

There is just one more side of education which I would like to refer to here and that concerns itself with the technique of education. Those of us who in the course of our professional work proceed on the assumption that the student is a mere receptacle into which it is the duty of the teacher to put in as much as he may during the period of an hour, and who treat with open scepticism or tolerant disbelief any of what they are pleased to call "those new-fangled notions of the West," will have a great deal to gain from what the Swamiji has to say on these. "Another thing that we want," he said, "is the abolition of that system which aims at educating our boys in the same manner as that of the man who battered

his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse." Explaining he continued, "You see, no one can teach anybody. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Thus the Vedanta says, that within man is all knowledge—even in a boy it is so,—and that it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher. We have to do only so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears, eyes, etc., and finally every thing will become easy." In a sentence which Miss Pankhurst would not have cared to improve, he said, "You cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. All you can do is on the negative side,—you can only help. It is a manifestation from within ; it develops its own nature, you can only take away obstructions." The above suggests a principle regarding the method of education which has been incorporated in some of the modern systems of education, but which so far as we in South India are concerned have, in spite of departmental blessings, been content to look on with amused indifference.

C. D. SUBRAMANIA CHETTIAR

COMMENT AND CRITICISM

"WHEN THE TWAIN SHALL MEET"

RUDYARD Kipling's famous couplet that "East is East and West is West and the twain shall never meet," has set the modern world furiously thinking. Yes, East is East and West is West. And it is well that it is so. But we doubt the latter portion of the Anglo-Indian poet's prophesy. The twain shall meet and in their meeting lies the good of humanity. Now what is the distinction between the East and the West? Reading history aright we find that broadly speaking the East denotes a civilisation in which the people are inspired by individual realisation, by the best human relationship duties, and ideals and by spiritual comforts as well as emancipation. The West on the other hand denotes a civilisation in which the people are under the dominance of group action, scientific and business organisation, efficiency, power, and material comfort as well as gratification. Professor Chu, writing in the *New Orient*, characterises the former as emotional, passive, timid and conservative; the latter as scientific, aggressive, adventurous and progressive. Though we do not agree with the Professor in his estimation of Oriental culture,—for the East is as masculine, scientific, dominant and progressive as the West,—yet we are quite one with him when he says that the future of the world lies in their assimilation of each other.

Let us go deeper and enquire into the origins of these civilisations. We find the Western civilisation began near the sea, and we find in it an almost continuous development of the struggling process with the sea. Through this struggle, came group action; commercial, scientific, business development and efficiency in power. On the other hand, Eastern civilisation was an inland civilisation. For example Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, China and India. Taking India which founded her civilization on the banks of the Ganges, for instance, we find that the Hindus, in art and philosophy, represent a distinct type of Eastern civilization. Due to the fertile soil and warm climate and abundance of nature's supply, India is naturally a home for leisure, meditation and mysticism. The abundance and leisure release the people from struggle and we find in India tolerance and love of peace developed. Thus the difference in these two civilizations are mostly due to circumstances and environments, not so much to original difference in human nature. If this is conceded, they need not be eternally

different nor need they be eternally antagonistic to each other. In recent years, Japan, though an Eastern nation, has been completely Westernised through effort and deliberate struggle. Who can say but that if India had been located among Western powers and had by geographical environment been compelled to grapple with the sea, she too would not have developed an aggressive civilization ?

I am not to be understood as advocating the Westernization of India. Not at all. We value our own civilization so much that we would not risk losing the beauty of it even for all the riches of the West. We have to take warning from the history of Japan. During recent years she has achieved wonders but one has to regret that Japan in holding up the Western model, may in time lose some of her precious spiritual qualities. But this is by the way.

At this moment the whole world is under Western influence. The very foundation of Western civilization is based upon the principle that money and power should dominate ; that races, nations and classes should not be given equal chance ; that the poor and the weak and the non-resistant should be crushed down and exploited for ever. Surely such a civilization cannot last. If it goes on unmodified, it will result in self-destruction either through material exhaustion, that is to say, through the depletion of its natural resources, or through material choking. The hope for the future lies in the coming together of the East and the West.

This, however, will not be a smooth and easy process. Nor can we say that it will be all to the good. The influence of the West has already raised the spectre of industrialism in the East with its concomitant evils. Great circumspection is therefore necessary. Facts must be faced and a way out should be found. The invention of machinery and highly developed industrialism are a misfortune to mankind. But they exist. The spread of industrialism is like a force of Nature ; we must accept it and make the best of it. The Hon'ble Bertrand Russell, one of the shrewdest observers of present-day civilization is of the opinion that in so far as Western culture consists of industrialism, it is fated to conquer the East. He quotes the instance of Japan which at an early stage adopted this view and acted upon it ; hence the political independence of Japan at the present day. He inquires assuming that Asia is to become industrial, is it possible to retain any of the distinctive traits of the various Asian civilizations ? The evils at present associated with industrialism is not inherent as a method of production ; they spring from its accidental association with competition and private monopoly. Any future

civilization must be a world-civilization. Asian ideals cannot be preserved in Asia except to the extent to which they can be spread over mankind. Asia must teach the West or unlearn her distinctive virtues, and in order to do so compromise will be necessary. Something of what the West has to teach in the way of technical efficiency will have to be assimilated, since otherwise the East will continue to be exploited and oppressed by the West. Industrialism has to be humanised. In order that this may be achieved, it is necessary to mitigate competition for the possession of raw materials by means of armies and navies. All raw materials ought to be owned internationally, and rationed to the different nations according to their needs. The main reason for modern wars would be eliminated if no nation could reap a profit out of the monopoly of some important source of raw materials. The result might be that industrialism would be devoted to increase the human happiness, not, as at present, to the spread of ferocity and destruction. This is the service which the East has to perform for her own sake and for the future of mankind.

THE MESSAGE OF MUSIC

The longing of the human soul to be *en rapport* with the divine soul, the effort of man to reach the Infinite, has been achieved through music. And it received its highest expression in India. We have the earliest example of it in the Sama Veda. Lord Sri Krishna's music on the flute which brought peace and harmony to man is well-known. The great mystic poets of India, Kabir, Thukaram, Thulsidas, Thyagaraja and a host of others have enshrined their noblest thought in divine music. Writing in the *New Orient*, Mr. D. Rudhyr attempts to give an idea of the peculiar characteristics of music but particularly Oriental music as a spiritualising force. He regrets that Oriental music is practically unknown in the West, or when known, is known only through its disfigured shadow on the rough wall of pianistic transcriptions. The main difference between Eastern and Western music, as he conceives it, is that the former is based on Nature's laws and is part of Nature's rhythm, while the latter is basically of man's personality, of an over-intellectualised culture. The outstanding result of such a fundamental difference is that, in India, the performance of music is a ritual, where man communes with the natural elements following the rhythm of their particular manifestations throughout seasons, months, days and hours. Everything in nature moves and the motion of all these natural forces

is an orderly one, regulated mainly by the revolution of the sun and at times of the moon. The result is that music needs to be attuned to natural conditions as they change hourly, daily, monthly. In other words, the various prototypes of Hindu melodies are magnetically linked with certain solar conditions and therefore must be sung at the exact time when such conditions are manifest. In India the influence of the magnetic music has been kept more powerful because of the inherent spirituality of the race. It has to be recognised that music has a definite purpose in the life of the race which Western music which is essentially a form, lacks. Eastern music is essentially life, a mysterious fragment of life captured by some great musician-soul to teach living people, and the real musicians are still considered as the teachers of the race and the messengers of a world sacred in nature. Mr. Rudhyr pleads for Western music listening to the message of the Eastern music in order that it may understand and adopt the vital element which gives to Indian music its natural and magnetic power. "Unless Western musicians realise their human mission as their Eastern comrades do and forsake commercialism in an endeavour to become cultural leaders and teachers of the harmony which is life, unless Art becomes a spiritualising force ensouled by the consciousness of a purpose, there is little hope that music in the future will become a great and elevating communal factor in the life of humanity. The age of the machine, of commercialism and of matter, is ruling over Western music as over Western souls. The ancient traditions of the East, which modern Orientals themselves have half forgotten, is the only salvation, the only beacon light, pointing to spiritual and true æsthetic triumphs."

A. S.

" INDIAN PHILOSOPHY* "

A REVIEW

I

MR. Radhakrishnan's book on Indian Philosophy is another important addition to the growing volume of literature of interpretation of the East to the West by Indian scholars. Time was when the glories of India, her literature, philosophy and sciences, had to be sung, and her achievements recorded, to the edification of the learned world only by Western savants. But with the growth of Western culture and Western methods of comparative and historical study and criticism, scholars of India have begun to delve deep into their own past and make critical studies of particular periods or institutions.

But occasionally the need is felt not for a specialized study on an isolated problem but a sweeping and scientific survey of achievements hitherto made. The average man likes to know the sum total of the achievements of critics and scholars with regard to a particular subject, like Indian Philosophy, or the Political History of the World, and he has no patience or time required to study the various special monographs upon aspects of this or that particular problem. This demand has in modern times been met in either of the two ways : one, a syndicate of scholars and experts write each upon his own special subject, and their combined effort in the form of a number of volumes dealing with the same subject, is published, as the *Historian's History of the World*, *The Cambridge Modern History*, or the recent publications like the *Cambridge History of India*, *Cambridge Ancient History*, and so on. Sometimes, a daring genius tries to make all knowledge in a particular field his own province and writes a comprehensive view of a topic from his own stand-point. The fact that there are many universal histories (Mr. H. G. Wells' *Outline* being the most prominent work published in recent times, and Prof. Hearnshaw's little book of barely 200 pages being the latest), shows there is a craving on the part of the cultured for books of that nature.

*INDIAN PHILOSOPHY, VOL. I by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, M. A., King George V Professor of Philosophy, University of Calcutta. Published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London.

It is such a demand that Prof. Surendranath Das Gupta's book recently published was meant to meet, and it is such a demand that Prof. Radhakrishnan in his book attempts to supply. The difficulties in the way of such a grand attempt are obvious and we are glad to see that the author is not oblivious of them. The author confesses in his preface that his aim is not "so much to narrate Indian views as to explain them," and claims that his book is no more than "a general survey of Indian thought, a short outline of a vast subject." The impartial student of Indian Philosophy, whether in the East or in the West, who is not obsessed with any sense of racial superiority and who is prepared to welcome light from whatever quarter it comes, is sure to welcome this book on Indian Philosophy, as Indian thought seems to have anticipated, with its wonderful spiritual insight and rationalism, the latest lines of advance in Western thought.

The author has rightly pointed out that in India philosophy is not a matter for the closet only, but that "the hard task of interesting the multitude in metaphysics has been achieved in this country," and that the philosophical doctrines have filtered down to the masses and form the basis of what we may call the mental furniture of even the ordinary man in the street. We cannot say the same with reference to the average man in the West. The great thoughts of Plato, of Spinoza, Kant or Hegel have not permeated the masses of the West, whereas the basic principles of the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* could be understood from the proverbs of the country, the songs of beggars and wandering minstrels. So Indian philosophy has a continuity and a living interest which few other philosophical systems of the world have.

The author has also laid emphasis upon the autonomous growth of Indian philosophy. There is a class of writers in the West who are not prepared to grant indigenous origin for anything great in India. They are anxious to ascribe the achievements of India's past to some external influence, Bactrian, Persian or Hellenic; but at least in the realm of philosophy India has had the opportunity of being the leader and not the led, and some frank Western scholars, such as Mr. E. J. Urwick in *The Message of Plato* (Methuen & Co.), are prepared to admit that some of the doctrines of even Plato must have been borrowed originally from India.

The author's defence of Indian philosophy against the unusual charges of pessimism, dogmatism, and being unethical

and unprogressive, is very just and convincing. We may be permitted to add that Western scholars from the time of Max Muller have pointed out that the best sanction for morality is found in the Upanishadic doctrine of the fundamental one-ness of the universe. Our author himself is forced to admit that the charge of non-progressiveness is applicable to a certain extent to Indian philosophy in recent times when people have been satisfied with taking everything stated by their teachers for granted and trying to merely defend the positions of their masters. If philosophy is search for truth in the light of experience, as the experience of mankind becomes larger and more varied by ceaseless researches of scientists and thinkers, we have to take stock of the situation from time to time, and it is the duty of the leaders of Indian thought, like the learned professor himself, to review the whole situation and tell us what would be the contribution of India to the great problems of the day in the light of her accumulated experience and the new knowledge gathered by others. Another important point emphasised upon by the author in his introduction, to which we would draw the special attention of all students of philosophy, both in the East and in the West, is the preliminary preparation insisted upon by philosophic teachers in India popularly known as *Sadhana Chatushtaya*. Doctrines of philosophy were not considered in India as mere matters of intellectual discussion, but they had to be approached with the necessary frame of mind, whose significance, unfortunately, has very often been neglected at the present time. The ancient Greek teachers insisted upon some such preliminary preparation, and mankind at large will be gainers by the revival of that institution.

The author has divided the whole period of Indian history into four sections, the Vedic, the Epic, the Sutra and the Scholastic Periods. The present volume deals only with the first two periods of Indian philosophy and brings the story down to the various schools of Buddhism, which flourished in the land in the post-*Gita* period.

II

The first two chapters of the Vedic period dealing as they do with the hymns of the Rig Veda and the transition from them to the later Upanishads are based almost entirely upon what the Western scholars have said on that subject.

That "polytheistic anthropomorphism of the earlier hymns tended to gradually develop into the spiritual monotheism" is what we have heard from Max Muller downwards. The author seems to have accepted the Western scholar's division of the Vedic period into different ages. It is necessary for us, however, to remember that all that Hopkins, Bloomfield, Max Muller, Macdonnel and others have said are only of a highly tentative nature, and that evidences are not wanting that there is slowly setting in a reaction based on archæological discoveries, against their theories.

Similarly though the author mentions the name of Sayana and says that he favoured naturalistic interpretation of the ancient Vedas, we are disappointed to see so few and meagre references to that great Eastern scholar.

III

The chapter upon the Upanishads is the most interesting and scholarly in the book. The learned author has already shown in his previous book, *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, his admiration for the Upanishads and his belief that they point to a very sure method of approach to reality.

We maintain, however, that if the author had approached the Upanishads from a different view-point, his conclusions would have been more correct. If it is admitted that the Upanishads are statements of living truths realised by the Rishis in their meditations, and not cold speculations of philosophers, it follows that the Reality would be perceived and described differently at different times, without being necessarily involved in contradictions. Thus the Rishis sometimes speak of the Real as personal and the world also as real. Sometimes when the realisation has become clearer, the world is found as half-real and half-unreal,—real so far only as its substratum is Brahman. But in a still deeper accession in meditation, the world vanishes, and the subject and object become one; and human language can refer to that state only as *Neti Neti Atma*.

The author holds that there are gradations of reality,—a conception which none will ever dispute. But it implies that just as, with the growing clearness of the spiritual vision, the Divine Reality becomes more and more manifest to the knower, the world also proportionately becomes more and more unreal. Hence it is that the world is sometimes said

to be *Vyavaharika*—empirical, sometimes as *Pratibhasika*—illusory, and sometimes *Mithya*—false. And none of these statements are untrue.

The section on evil and suffering is comparatively meagre. To say that evil is necessary for the fuller development of good, that it is the banks whose presence is necessary to make the stream flow more rapidly is not explaining the existence of evil.

The section on Karma is written so as to satisfy the modern reader and tries to show how Karma is not inconsistent with social service or with Theism and the love of God.

The exposition of the doctrine of Transmigration appears to be lukewarm and halting as the author does not seem to be in favour of retrogression of human soul into animals after having come to the level of humanity. In this, the author discusses the possibility of only two interpretations, the Advaitic and Vishishtadvaitic, and does not think seriously of the Dvaitic interpretation. "It is difficult," says the author, "to decide whether it is the non-dualism of Shankara or the modified position of Ramanuja that is the final teaching of the parent gospel." What about the various other forms of Vedantic interpretation that have been claiming allegiance in this country for untold ages?

The author's remark about the post-Upanishadic period that in it life became a series of observances, that "one could not wake up or rise from his bed without muttering some formula or observing some rite," is unnecessarily sarcastic, as he himself has shown previously that for clear perception of truth the personality of the subject is of great importance, and the framers of these rules and observances looked upon them as various stages of perfecting that instrument of observation, *i. e.*, the man himself. We have to judge every age from the point of view of that age and not from our own point of view. This truth emphasised upon by the author himself in an earlier section of the chapter, where he says, "We shall try to ascertain the meaning which the authors of the Upanishads intended and not what the later commentators attributed to them," seems to have been forgotten by him.

In this as in later sections the author emphasises upon what he considers the indifference to the sacredness of the Vedas of the Upanishads and the Gita. It may be shifting

of emphasis from one part to another, from action to knowledge ; but to say that the knowledge portion is indifferent to the earlier portion is not consistent with the traditional view of the question that obtains in this country.

Perhaps, some readers will find it a bit puzzling to be told in one place about the Upanishads " that their aim was not science or philosophy but right living," and in another place to be told " that the central theme of the Upanishads is the problem of philosophy, that is the search for what is true." This apparent inconsistency is due to the fact that in India at any rate no distinction was intended to be made between philosophy, religion and ethics, and we may add, sciences also ; because, the sages have affirmed that the disinterested pursuit of knowledge in any field, whether it is logic or grammar or any other science, leads to Nisreyasa or Moksha.

IV

The two chapters on Jainism and Buddhism are exhaustive and contain a lucid account of the chief tenets of these two great branches of Indian thought, branches which in orthodox circles are usually neglected. That Buddhism was not a branching away from Hinduism, that it was a continuation of the older thought and existed side by side for a long time with the older religion of the country, are facts worthy of remembering. We are disappointed, however, to see that no reference is made to the great classical works in Tamil on Jainism and Buddhism, which must have contributed their own quota in the development of these systems.

V

The chapter on Gita is a masterly exposition of the principal contents of that great classic viewed with reference to various problems that arise in any philosophical study.

The following few observations however are made not in any way disparaging the author's great work, but in the spirit of a student.

In several passages, the author has suggested that " the Gita teaches a method which is within the reach of all, that of Bhakti, or devotion to God." Though no doubt references to Bhakti are more numerous in the Gita than in the Upanishads, its distinctive characteristic, if any (for the Gita is after all a synthesis of different spiritual ideals and methods), is its doctrine of Karma Yoga and not Bhakti. That the author him-

self is conscious of that is clear from such passages in the later part of the chapter as : " The whole setting of the Gita points out that it is an exhortation to action."

In the section on Karma Marga (on page 566) there are ever so many statements made for which no reference to the original is given. We wish the author had added a few more foot-notes. When he makes a statement that right conduct " is whatever expresses our real unity with God, man and nature, and wrong conduct is whatever does not bring out this essential structure of reality," the reader may justifiably expect wherefrom he got the facts for such a generalisation.

Again, is it quite correct to say that the Gita holds that " service of humanity is worship of God," or that " the ideal devotee of the Gita is one in whom love is lighted up by knowledge and bursts forth into a fierce desire to suffer for mankind"? There is too much of the tinge of modernism in such interpretations. His defence of caste on page 571 and social service on page 580 suffers from the same defect.

The author's interpretation of the Adwaita Ideal is often very timid, as in the following passage : " When devotion is perfected, then the individual and his God become suffused into one spiritual ecstasy and *reveal themselves as aspects of one life.*" What does he exactly mean by *aspects*? We almost wish the author had been less poetic and more precise in his style.

VI

The chapter on the Materialism of India is very interesting. The orthodox people treat these bold thinkers with a certain amount of contempt and very often caricature them. They have been rightly given a place of distinction in this general survey of Indian thought. There is something uncanny in the fact that these Charvakas are sometimes known as Barhaspatyas, a fact which requires explanation considering that Brihaspati is generally supposed to be the teacher of the Devas.

VII

The book on the whole is of absorbing interest from beginning to end, and is written in that lucid style which is characteristic of the learned author. Those who may be inclined to find fault with it as lacking in profundity will have to remember that the author himself is not ignorant of the difficult nature of the task, and is not unconscious of his own

limitations. We believe that the author's one aim has been to rouse a genuine and living interest in the minds of dispassionate students about this much neglected subject of Indian Philosophy and not to pose himself as an authoritative guide in all the various branches of Indian Philosophy. We are quite sure the book has more than fulfilled its object, if it is as we have stated. We congratulate the author on his excellent performance, and hope the second volume will soon be published.

S. K. Y.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

"SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM"

MONK AS EDUCATIONIST

IN a letter written to a disciple in 1894, Swami Vivekananda thus defined education and religion : " Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man." The definitions are significant and show that from Swamiji's point of view, education is more comprehensive than religion inasmuch as the one includes the other. For attainment of perfection connotes not only the manifestation of Divinity, but also of the varied graces of head and heart and of hands. In this sense, if one word can express the task which has been set before the Institution founded by Swamiji, namely, Sri Ramakrishna Mission, it is " Education."

Thus the choice of the subject "*Swami Vivekananda and Educational Reform*" by the lecturer, Mr. C. D. Subramania Chettiar, himself an educationist, on the occasion of Swamiji's birthday anniversary was a happy one. He has given, in his paper a nice *resume* of the main points of the educational scheme Swamiji had in view. No subject perhaps was nearer to his heart, and throughout his speeches and writings are scattered hints and suggestions which, elaborated, may fill volumes. From these however it will be too bold and enterprising to formulate a detailed scheme. But the direction has been indicated, bearings of the route are there and the fundamentals at least are clearly and boldly laid down. One of those fundamentals is that the education of the Hindus, both secular and spiritual, must be in the hands of the Sannyasins. Swamiji is so emphatic on this point that he almost ascribes the downfall of the Hindus to the transference of education from the hands of monks to

householders'. Considering the present state of education in India, the suggested reversion of the teaching agency appears highly improbable. In fact the lecturer himself has expressed grave doubts as to its feasibility. It must however be remembered that conditions prevailing now, are at best unnatural and abnormal, and the future can be forecasted more truly on the basis of data gathered from the past than from the present.

OBJECTIONS

Mr. Chettiar's objections can be summarised as follows :

(i) Sannyasins are lacking in experience of the world.

(ii) It will standardise the teaching agency, and will therefore be reactionary, the present tendency in the world of education being towards diversity.

(iii) There might not be a sufficient number of Sannyasins.

Control of national education by monks is not a unique suggestion. It is well-known that education in medieval Europe was entirely in the hands of monks and nuns, as also in India during the Buddhistic period. It may be said that education in that age concerned only a minority, whereas now the schoolmaster is abroad. The third objection mentioned above is therefore real. The example of Burma however disarms this criticism. For there a very high percentage of literacy is being maintained mainly through the agency of monasteries. Besides we maintain that India who in no age ever knew any dearth of monks, is going in the present age at least, to send out tens of thousands of her best children into the path of complete renunciation, and to those the service of man will be verily the worship of God.

The second objection also can be easily met. Though the teachers may be Sannyasins, there is no reason why

they should not adopt all sound and scientific methods of education. The *gerua* does not stand for any narrow dogmatic or credal view of life and truth, or any set methods of self-realisation. It represents those universal basic truths of life and reality that constitute the common factors of all creeds and religions, and recognises only those eternal laws that govern the life of the spirit. The Sannyasin therefore, can unhesitatingly take recourse to all up-to-date processes of training that the educand's needs may demand ; and there is thus an infinite scope for maintaining diversity of educational methods, provided of course that the ultimate goals of the teacher and taught are not conflicting. But we need not be apprehensive on that point, for, Self-realisation which India has set before her sons and daughters as the only end towards which their unceasing efforts should tend, is no arbitrary assignation, but appointed by the inexorable laws of our very being. And Renunciation is but the necessary corollary of Self-realisation.

Mr. Chettiar however seems diffident to accept the truth of the above statement. When he asks "whether it is not more necessary to get each and every man to be in his own way a seeker after truth and a proclaimer thereof," he only hints at the possibility of a clash of ideals. But this doubt strikes at the very root of things ; and when it is a question of facts, reasoning cannot avail anything. We shall therefore investigate into the truth of his first objection.

IDEALS OF EDUCATION

A system of education must serve this two-fold purpose : (i) it must make the taught efficient, and (ii) fill his mind with idealism. In our country in the present times efficiency can be gained firstly by a knowledge of various arts and industries—a necessary equipment for whomsoever wants successfully to fight his way up in the keen struggle that the present industrial age means ; and

secondly by admitting him into the heritage of at least the fundamentals of the knowledge that humanity as a whole now possesses, that he may interpret his cultural inheritance in the terms of what may be conveniently termed the modern outlook and preserve his cultural continuity unimpaired. But the function of education does not stop here : mere efficiency is not enough, for it serves only the earthly and temporary purpose, and is sure to end in stagnation of life, unless it is made to fulfil a higher purpose in which alone the daily details of our life have their meaning and justification. Here in India this ideal is always spiritual. For ages past this has been the one incessant effort of the Hindu social polity to make spiritual idealism active and operative even in the lowest strata of society, so that even the meanest avocation might assume the glory of a sacrament. Every little detail of domestic and social life has been made to yield its eternal meaning, and down the millenniums of India's long history rings the eternal cry, "What shall I do with that which does not grant me immortality?" Thus it is that, in the Hindu eye, every branch of knowledge, however secular, was a *Vedanga*, a limb of the Veda, and the teacher thereof a *Rishi* ; not because knowledge in itself was always considered holy, but because all knowledge was made to fulfil life's ultimate purpose and thus became holy, and only a *Rishi*, a man of renunciation and self-realisation, could impart knowledge in that true spirit. In the ancient scheme of education therefore, it was only the *Rishis* and *Brahmanas* that were allowed to occupy the honoured position of a teacher ; and though in many cases they were householders, care was taken that their life was solely dedicated to the quest and realisation of the Eternal and was not soiled by labours for earthly gains. If that institution of world-free *Rishis* and *Brahmanas* could be revived now, assuredly education would have gone into their hands. But it was long ago dead, never to come to life again and its place has been

taken by celibate Sannyasins, and the future of Hindu education lies in their hands.

ARE MONKS LACK-EXPERIENCE ?

But here the question arises : Can they these lack-experience monks impart an *efficient* training ? " Idealism is all right," it will be said, " but when it is a question of bread earning, better we go to them that know the ways of the world where alone we are to win our bread, and not to the monks." The objection is plausible but unreal. Firstly, this bi-partite division is false and dangerous, partly for reasons alluded to before and partly because it is against the national polity and is therefore destructive. Secondly, the assumption that Sannyasins are lacking in the experience of the world is a myth. What is the world after all in its relation to humanity ? If it is art, literature, philosophy, science and such other knowledge, have not the Sannyasins been always in the vanguard in their acquisition ? In whatever has conduced to the welfare of mankind, has not the monk's place been always in the first rank ? It is absolutely untrue that the Sannyasin has kept himself aloof from the contact of the world. But of course he has nothing to do with a world where animal passions of man reign supreme.

But let us accept the truth of the charge. Even then it is to be proved that want of world's experience is a disqualification. Too much emphasis on *experience* is distinctly western in conception. There in the West, such are the vagaries of modern civilisation, the ideal man is a captain of industry. Money, money,—that is the one cry, and education for the majority has come to mean *efficiency*. It tends to make the educand a good fighter for the loaves and fishes but very little more. Surely India must scorn to place this tin-god on the altar of her worship. We admit, we also require industrial education to help ourselves rehabilitate our economic

conditions, but not at the cost of our ancient ideal. Such a sacrifice is not necessary, for there is no real conflict between worldly prosperity and spiritual idealism. And no more than common moral virtues (in addition of course to the necessary knowledge of arts and sciences) is necessary to make one fit to earn such legitimate terrestrial comforts. When life does not hold any higher purpose than mere earthly gains, then only the way to such gains becomes crooked and loathsome, unfit for honest men to tread. Such unfortunately is the present state of things. But it will be insane to accept them as normal conditions, or fashion national life to their measure. We shall have to chalk out our own path, and not many of world's dark secrets are necessary to make us strong walkers of that path.

VALUE OF EXPERIENCE

What is experience? It is knowledge acquired directly or indirectly through contact with the external world. Experiences accumulating from moment to moment reveal themselves in the long run as parts and workings of laws which control the life of man and the world. Such revelations are the ultimate value of experience. But is there no way to the realisation of those laws except along the long-winding path of worldly experience? Western pedagogy does not know of any such path and accordingly concerns itself in devising methods for training the mind as an efficient instrument for collecting facts. Indian psychology however recognises a process by which independent of the contact with the external world, the coveted knowledge of the eternal verities can be gained. This process is called *Concentration*. Practice of concentration accompanied by *Brahmacharya* has been considered from the most ancient times as a very successful method of attaining to perfect knowledge of both the internal and external world. It

is assumed that man is by his very nature omniscient and omnipotent ; it is mental restlessness that clouds this consciousness. By calming the mind, man regains his original nature, and all knowledge and power become his. Even a little of the practice of concentration makes the mind a very efficient instrument of knowledge, and truths which empirical knowledge needs years to attain, reveal themselves in a flash to the purified vision of a concentrated mind. Truths are not hidden, they are clear and obvious ; because *we* are blind, we do not perceive them. The natural course therefore is to regain our vision and not blindly grope in the dark for them.

This fact holds a very important place in the Indian educational scheme. Swamiji certainly felt it when he said, " To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument, I could collect facts at will. " The Hindu boy, invested with the holy thread as a preliminary to his admission into the student life, is taught as the very first thing the secret of concentration. And three times a day he sits in meditation turning his mind's eye towards the inner self, self-absorbed and unconscious of the external. This practice he pursues throughout his life. And one day perchance the scales fall off from his eyes and the Vision Beatific bursts on him, and even the sting of a cobra becomes suffused with the sweetness of a message from the Beloved.

Considered in the above light it will surely be granted that world's experience is not after all such a desideratum and lack of it such a disqualification.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The *Janma-tithi*, as was announced in our last issue, fell on Tuesday, the 24th of February, and was duly celebrated with special puja, bhajana and entertainment of devotees. The public celebration comes off on Sunday the 8th March. The items of the programme are Bhajana in the morning, Feeding of Poor-Narayanans in the noon, and Harikatha in the after-noon, after which at 4-30 p. m. a lecture on "Sri Ramakrishna" will be delivered in Tamil, and at 5-30. M. R. Ry. A. Chakravarthi, Avl., M. A. L. T., Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, Madras, will speak in English on "Sri Ramakrishna, His Life and Teachings."

All are cordially invited to join in the celebration.

Voluntary contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged.

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THE R. K. MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN NORTHERN INDIA

All operations of the Mission in the flood-stricken areas of Brindaban, Bhagalpur, and Hardwar-Kankhal have been stopped, as the conditions prevailing there at present necessitate no further work. The Mission thankfully acknowledges the receipt of three bales of sample cloths from Messrs. Ralli Brothers and Co. and other new as well as old cloths from different charitable societies.

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BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

AT MADRAS

The public celebration of Swamiji's Birth-day came off on Sunday, the 25th January. The programme consisted of Bhajana in the morning, and between 10 A. M. to 2 P. M. about two thousand poor-Narayanans were fed. In the after-noon, a Harikatha Kalakshepam took place, followed by a lecture in Tamil on "Vivekananda-Vijayam" by Sriman K.S. Ramaswami Aiyar, with Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri in the chair. The last item on the programme was a lecture in English under the presidentship of Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastriar, Advocate-General, by Mr. C. D. Subramania Chettiar, Principal, Government College, Coimbatore. His subject was "Swami Vivekananda and Educational Reform." The paper is printed in this issue.

Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri who was asked to address, said that when Swami Vivekananda came to Travancore, he was a boy studying in

the Maharaja's College. Swamiji's face charmed him very much and he had a wonderful personality. Referring to Kalidasa's works which the speaker was then reading, Swamiji observed that Kalidasa embodies the highest ideals of manhood. He then said that Swamiji's view of education might be summed up in three words : Patriotism, Practicality and Sympathy.

Messrs. N. Subramania Aiyar and N. R. Kedari Rao also spoke on some aspects of the Swamiji's life. The President made a few remarks on the general and practical side of education, and the function terminated with the distribution of *Prasadam*.

AT PATNA

The most unique feature of the celebration at Patna was a All-Religions Procession, organised on the 18th January by the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, as a preliminary to the public celebration on the 25th on which day, besides Bhajana and entertainment of devotees, nearly 3,000 Poor-Narayanans were sumptuously fed with various nicely prepared dishes.

The conception of the procession was indeed beautiful and does great credit to the imagination of the organiser, Swami Jnaneswarananda, President of the Ashrama, and his assistants. The procession started from the Ashrama premises at 4 P. M. Some sixteen cyclist volunteers with *gerua* flags with "Om" inscribed on them headed the procession as heralds. They were followed by a band party on both sides of which was held aloft the symbol of the Ramakrishna Mission, signifying the harmony of the four great paths of Self-realisation. Behind them was carried a huge proscenium on which were painted a temple, a church and a mosque illustrating the unity of the followers of different religions, which the great Swami preached. "Respect for all Religions" were written large above and "*Ekam Sat, Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*," "Glory to God, etc," "*Bismilla Arrahman Ur Rahim*" were written below. Then followed another troop of boys carrying flags, and the Swamis of the Ashrama with a number of men singing sweet songs specially composed for the occasion. Then came in succession five motor cars decorated with flowers and foliage, on which were placed a picture of Sri Rama, the Crescent, the Cross, and Pictures of Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna respectively. Lastly came an elephant with a *howdah* on which was placed a large heroic picture of Swami Vivekananda. Each car was preceded by a party carrying appropriate flags and singing songs, and the one noticeable feature was that it was Mahomedan boys that heralded the car containing the Crescent. Thus was demonstrated the great principle of the unity of all religions and religious toleration, for which the Swami lived and

which he preached all his life. Says *The Express* of Patna, "The commonest people of the street could at once know that the procession respected all religions. It was a sight for the gods to see. It is a lesson to learn, a successful example. It is interesting to note that the procession stopped before every mosque, church, and temple, and men of all religions appreciated it when the volunteers presented salutes at every such place."

AT BOMBAY

At Bombay the Birthday Anniversary of Swamiji was celebrated with great success at Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar Road, Bandra. This year the occasion was graced by the presence of Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, the revered President of our Order and Mission.

The *Tithi* fell on Saturday, the 17th January, and was observed with special puja and offerings. A life-size portrait of Swamiji was tastefully decorated in the Ashrama Hall. A good number of devotees, representing various communities, met there to offer their worship and join in the festival. There was music by expert singers, as also a charming concert organised by some of the Bengali residents of Bombay. The function came to a close with the distribution of *prasadam*.

The public celebration took place next day, the 18th, in a spacious pandal erected for the occasion on a plot of land adjoining to the Ashrama. There was a large gathering, including many of the men of light and leading of Bombay. The morning performance consisted of Bhajana, Music, and Pravacher by Mr. Dhurandhar. Swami Sharvanandaji made a short speech suited to the occasion. About 200 people, including the children of the local depressed classes, were fed.

In the evening a cosmopolitan assembly of ladies and gentlemen gathered in the Marwadi Vidyalaya Hall, under the presidentship of Mr. M. R. Jayakar. The Chairman in course of his opening speech said that they had that evening selected a list of some of the best speakers who would dwell on the different aspects of Swamiji's life, and remarked that Swami Vivekananda had secured for Indians a perpetual passport in all quarters of the Globe which no amount of national or political activities would ever have done. Swami Vivekananda had secured respect for Indians which was denied to them on account of their nationality.

Mr. K. Natarajan, Mr. G. B. Trivedi, Mr. G. K. Devdhar, Prof. N. G. Damle, Mr. Mavji Govindji, Dr. Rajabally Patel, Mr. F. J. Ginwalla, and Principal Puntambekar—severally spoke on the life and teachings of Swamiji, after which Swami Shivanandaji was

requested to address the audience. But Swamiji declined to speak as his voice had gone down. Swamiji, however, asked Swami Sharvanandaji to speak.

Swami Sharvanandaji said that Swami Vivekananda was a versatile genius. Men of diametrically opposite views quoted Swami Vivekananda chapter and verse in support of their views. Both out and out social reformers and orthodox Hindus pointed to Swami Vivekananda as their champion. If Swami Vivekananda was anything, he was a man of God-realisation. That was his *forte*. Continuing, he said that Swami Vivekananda was a great exponent of the adaptation of the great virtues of the West. The Swami wound up his speech by calling upon the audience to follow in the footsteps of Swami Vivekananda and awaken the dormant lion of divinity within them.

Mr. M. R. Jayakar in his closing remarks made a fervent appeal for funds on behalf of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, as a result of which Rs. 105 were collected on the spot.

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FOUNDATION LAID OF THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, BOMBAY

Our readers will be glad to learn that the Bombay Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama has already acquired a piece of land at Khar Road, Bandra, for its permanent habitation. His Holiness Swami Shivanandaji laid the foundation on the 6th February. The cost of the building has been estimated at Rs. 25,000, and already a fair amount has been promised. It was a fond wish of Swami Vivekananda to start four main centres of his work in the Himalayas, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The first three centres were established even during his lifetime. Now in the foundation of the Bombay Ashrama on a permanent basis his wish attains its fullest realisation.

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SWAMI SHIVANANDAJI AT NAGPUR.

Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj left Bombay for Calcutta on the 13th February. On his way he stopped at Nagpur for about five days, where he had been invited with Swami Sharvanandaji. Their reception was very enthusiastic, and many of the leading inhabitants especially the Bengali community came to pay their respects, and were benefited by their spiritual instructions. While there, Swami Shivanandaji laid the foundation of an Ashrama in the Craddock Town where it is expected a branch of our Order will soon be established. Swami Shivanandaji reached Calcutta on the 19th February. Swami Sharvanandaji returned to Madras on the 21st February.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

SOUTH INDIA FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN 1924

OUR readers are aware that owing to the unprecedentedly high floods in the Cauveri, the Bhawani and a few West Coast rivers, the districts of Coimbatore, Salem, Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Malabar, and parts of Cochin and Travancore States were seriously affected and in all of them there arose keen distress about the end of July 1924. Houses were washed away in thousands and the fields on either bank were silted rendering cultivation futile and impossible, the labourers were thrown out of employ and the poorer classes were left hungry and destitute.

On hearing the first report of the situation, two Swamis of the Mission left for Trichinopoly on the 22nd July and two for Coimbatore on the same date. After much difficulty, owing to railway and other communications having been cut off, they reached the affected areas and with the help of the local officials and other public men made a preliminary inspection. Three kinds of work had to be undertaken, (a) free distribution of rice and other food grains to the starving poor, and selling of rice at reduced rates, (b) distribution of cloths to the distressed, and (c) distribution of hut building materials and helping to erect new huts on suitable sites.

FOOD SUPPLY : As soon as the reconnoitering work was finished, actual relief operations began on the 27th July. In distributing food grains care was taken that only persons who were in actual need were granted relief, the quantity and kind of grains being determined by the need and habits of the recipients. As soon as conditions improved (by the middle of August), not only were the quantity and the number of recipients cut down but distribution was made once in three days or more sufficient for the period, the interval being spent by the workers in further inspection and enlistments for help. In the districts of Tanjore and Trichinopoly the work of distributing food grains was made easy, since a number of workmen found employment in the repairs carried on by the Public Works Department and the Railway authorities. In British Malabar, in addition to free distribution of food grains, a rice depot was opened for selling rice at reduced rates to those who could afford to pay and nearly 60 per cent. of the affected villagers were benefited by this arrangement.

CLOTHING : It was a heart-rending fact that among Panchamas, Chucklers, Oddars, Pulayans and other poorer classes there were a very large number of persons badly in need of clothing, with not even a sheet to cover their body. At the very outset, the Mission had to purchase a large number of new cloths. As time went on, there was however a ready response from many quarters and old cloths were received in thousands, but as many of these were shirts and coats and not dhoties or sarrees, the full need had to be met by further new purchases.

HUT-BUILDING RELIEF : As soon as conditions became favourable, attention was turned to the building of huts. This was the more important, substantial and permanent item of work. In some places, it was found unsafe to rebuild the huts on their old sites liable to be exposed to future floods and so new sites had to be acquired. The aid of the Government as well as of private owners was sought for to secure the object, for which the Mission tenders its sincere thanks to them. The Mission is glad to mention that in the districts of Trichinopoly and Coimbatore, the Government very kindly arranged for a free supply of several thousands of bamboos from their forest reserves.

The new houses were built under the careful supervision of the workers of the Mission with the greatest economy and on well thought-out plans. The new villages in Satyamangalam, Bhawani and other places in Coimbatore show what possibilities there are in remodelling our villages and how the sanitary and hygienic conditions of life can be easily improved.

CENTRES OF WORK : Bhawani, Satyamangalam, Dhalavai-pettai, Nerinipet, Sampally, Arasur, Kothamangalam and Attani were the centres of Mission's work in Coimbatore and Salem ; Srirangan, Alagarai, Kodyalam, Tirumanur (Udayarpalaiyam), in Trichinopoly; Maharajapuram, Manalmedu, Pattavarthy and Valluagudi, in Tanjore; Thiriparayar, Edathuruthy, Kaladi, Chovera, Kanjoor, Malayattoor, Kundoor and Karuvannoor, in British Malabar, Cochin and Travancore States. 74 villages were covered in Coimbatore and Salem, 64 in Tanjore, 39 in Trichinopoly and 23 in Malabar. Altogether there were 32 workers working in 24 different centres, covering 200 villages. In the different districts altogether 17,153 persons were granted food relief, 6,133 new pieces of cloth were distributed, besides many old cloths, and 7,036 huts were erected. The Swamis in charge of the centres were assisted by students from the Mission Students' Home in Mylapore, by voluntary workers of the localities and by the local officials. A sufficient number of experienced workers not being available in Madras, four workers had to be brought down from the Mission Head-quarters at Calcutta.

FINANCE : The total receipts are Rs. 66,439-5-2 and the expenditure Rs. 53,706-2-0 leaving a balance of Rs. 12,733-3-2 which is deposited at present in the Madras Central Urban Bank. It is proposed to open a Provident Relief Fund with this amount as a nucleus, as the Mission had done in other centres for similar work in Northern India, so as to give a ready start and to organise famine and flood relief works in case of such contingencies arising at any time.

CONCLUSION : In conclusion the Mission thanks one and all the subscribers and donors, the various relief committees and philanthropic institutions and all those who have co-operated in various ways with the Mission in alleviating the sufferings of the poor and the distressed.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

" Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

" Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ' I am the Atman.' "

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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GURU AND GOD

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

GOD being infinite and infinity being absolutely one without a second, there cannot be more than one God. The souls of all other living beings (Jivatmas) all throughout the creation, must have to be finite and as such none of them, whether celestial, terrestrial or infernal, can have the power to know and explain God, for how can the finite ever know the Infinite? The finite mind having no power to fathom the infinite mind, it is not possible for any created being to know the ways of God.

Compared to infinity the finite quantity, however big it may be, must be infinitesimally small or zero, as the former must be infinite times bigger than the latter. So compared to God, all souls, celestial, terrestrial or infernal, are perfectly insignificant and as such they are absolutely under His control. Thus the souls, not being free and not knowing to guide themselves, on account of the limited nature of their minds, should be guided by God, their omnipotent and omniscient Master, if they want to get rid of death and countless woes ; and their highest

wisdom should consist in allowing themselves to be guided by God and not by themselves.

But how to know the mind of the Lord ? The souls have no power to know it, as we have already seen. Hence, God of infinite Love has revealed a part of Himself in the Vedas and the different Scriptures of the different nations of the world, such as the Bible, the Koran, the Zendavesta, etc. Obedience to the Vedas and the Scriptures constitutes the different Dharmas or Religions of the world. He who is obedient to God is thus called dharmika or religious.

Since God must have to be His own interpreter, when men misunderstand the Scriptures and thus misbehave, He must have to incarnate Himself in order to establish religion.

These Incarnations are the Gurus or the true Teachers of the world, and being the manifested embodiments of God, by obeying and worshipping them, we obey and worship God Himself. The Scriptures can be rightly explained only by these Gurus or visible Gods. Thus God only can lead a man to God and no one else.

When God feels the necessity to incarnate Himself, He comes down (avatarana) to our level to be accessible to us and hence an incarnation is called Avatara. As long as He stays with us here He conquers all the enemies of the good and right-minded people by the power of His irresistible personality and infinite wisdom, and establishes religion once again on the adamant basis of truth. Before He leaves this earth and rises up to His own infinite glory, He imparts His Illuminating Power to His disciples wherewith they become the true Gurus or Teachers of humanity. These Gurus again in their turn impart their guru-power to their disciples who thus become the Gurus of humanity ; and this imparting the guru-power goes on from generation to generation until it becomes very much attenuated and is not able to cope with the rising powers of irreligion on all sides. Then

God again incarnates to establish religion, and this is going on throughout eternity.

From what has been said above, it is clear that the Guru is the same as God ; He is the visible and tangible God indispensably necessary for the salvation of man, as God only can lead a man to God and no one else. So gurus must not be confounded with mahatmas who are but highly evolved souls and are as such, blind and imperfect. How can the blind ever lead the blind ? Guru has been defined in the Scriptures not only to be the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe but also the One Absolute Being beyond Space, Time and Causation. So by obeying and worshipping the Guru, we obey and worship God Himself. Guru is not an intermediate being, distinct and separate from God, but God Himself graciously assuming a human form for the salvation of man. Sri Ramakrishna Mission therefore teaches the indispensable necessity of a Guru on the part of one who wants to realize salvation in this life, and in so doing it only confirms the truth, that God only can lead a man to God and no one else.

In India the followers of the Religion Eternal (Hinduism) therefore invariably have Gurus to take them to God. Every Hindu family has a Guru who imparts in secret the soul-saving instruction, usually consisting of one or more holy names of the Lord, to each grown-up member of the family when he or she is found to be eligible for it, with due religious ceremonies to make it more impressive to the disciple. The particular member who gets the instruction and thus becomes a disciple is enjoined to repeat it within himself or herself with a whole-souled devotion in a solitary place every morning, noon, and evening, after having purified the body either by washing or bathing. If the disciple can afford to increase the number of repetition, he or she will thereby approach the Ideal nearer and nearer and will thus be able to reach the Goal sooner.

When most of these Gurus of the various families misbehave and to lose the reverence of their disciples, then the time comes to usher into the world another Incarnation of God.

In this rationalistic age men of culture in every civilized community have grown less and less credulous, and hence they have begun to question the saving powers of these Teachers, most of whom have lost their spiritual nature and degenerated themselves into carnality and corruption. How can they who are too weak to stand the onslaughts of sensuality themselves ever have any power to save others? Those who fall a prey to all sorts of temptations are too worthless and abominable to be of any help to others. Thus looking down upon those who represent religion, they have begun to lose all faith in the religion itself, and that is why we find amongst the educated population of the world rank disbelief, and irreverence, nay, even atheism. These men are ready to obliterate even the least trace of religion which they regard as a bundle of superstitions and the sooner it is destroyed, the better for all humanity, they think.

In India, after the introduction of Western education, complaints were raised against the existing system of Hindu Religion. The so-called educated Hindus began to regard the various ceremonies in connection with their religion to be superstitious and they wanted to have a religion devoid of all these, and the result was various reform movements such as Brahmoism, Arya Samaj, etc. The family preceptors lost their hold upon the educated, although a few of them and almost all illiterate men stuck to them. The few educated persons who still entertain great reverence for the Gurus say, "What though the ways of our Gurus are bad? We do not want *them*, but the *instructions* of which they are the medium. These instructions flow directly from the throne of God and hence have the power to lead us to Him." Such persons are already infused with faith and reverence, and it is

these that help them mostly in deriving the highest benefit from the teachings of such Gurus, by enabling them to overlook all the shortcomings of the latter. But such men are very few, and the generality of men nowadays demand purity and spirituality from a Teacher under whom they are to place themselves; and since these are not found in most teachers, they have been leading life without any religion and instead of worshipping God, are worshipping themselves, and one another. "This world and this life are all in all. There is no after-life, no God to whom we are going to be responsible for what we do. Let us eat, drink and be merry as much as we can. We should treat others kindly as we want kindness from them. Society is our God, as we get all help from it and not from any invisible Deity. Faith in such an invisible Being is sheer nonsense and rank superstition. We shall have none of them." This is how they have disposed of God and religion, and hence according to His own promise, the Lord of the Universe has incarnated Himself as Sri Ramakrishna for all nations and all religions. The time needed Him and He could not remain indifferent to the call of His many children who ardently prayed to Him for help, not knowing what to accept and what to reject.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

SWAMI SARADANANDA

Tota Puri

(Continued from page 326.)

I T has already been mentioned that Totapuri belonged to western India and consequently he possessed a type of physical health, scarcely enjoyed by the people of other parts of India. He never knew what disease, dyspepsia or other kinds of physical ailments were. Whatever he ate, he could digest easily ; wherever he could lay down his body, he found no difficulty to fall asleep. And there flowed in his mind in thousand streams peace and ecstasy begotten of God-realisation and God-consciousness. But when, being attracted by the love and unique spiritual nature of the Master, he continued to live for some months in the temple of Dakshineswar, the climate and the humid atmosphere of Bengal began to tell upon his health, and even such a strong physique as his could not keep up its immunity from disease. His body yielded to a strong attack of dysentery and the terrible sufferings from the constant griping pain characteristic of the disease, were so great that even the well-disciplined mind of Tota could not maintain its habitual Brahma-consciousness and was often dragged down to the feelings of the body. 'Brahman was caught in the meshes of five elements,' and now there was no other means of escape except the grace of that omnipotent, universal Power, the Mother of the whole universe.

Before the disease developed into an acute form the alert mind of Tota had become fully conscious that the climate of the place was not suitable to his health. But at first he waived all considerations of the physical body before the claims of spiritual bliss he was enjoying in the company of that Divine Man. The Vedantic cast of his mind naturally precluded all *real* valuations of the

physical health,—his consciousness soared to the transcendental region of Brahman and constantly feasted upon the bliss 'that passeth all understanding.' How could he afford or get respite to give any attention to the claims of the body ?

But nature must have her course ! Slowly the disease began to make its inroad into the body of Totapuri and from time to time the pain caused by the disease was unerringly felt. Further when the disease advanced a little and brought about some perturbation in the serenity of inner joy of Tota's mind, he thought that now he must shift ; and often he went to the Master to speak to him for the last time and take leave of him ; but every time he went to him with that idea, he forgot to tell the very thing he had gone to speak in other conversations, and at the end he would come back to his own place at Panchavati. Thus day after day, in spite of the disease, he could not cut away from the Master. But in the meantime when the matter was made known to the Master he made all possible arrangements for proper treatment and diet through Mathur Babu. But nothing could produce any abatement of the disease. Only up to this time, though there was the pain yet the suffering did not assume so acute a form as to produce hinderance in Tota's attaining Samadhi at will. He found, he could withdraw his mind from his body and merge it in the untrammelled consciousness of Brahman, and thus forget his body with all its ailments whenever he desired.

But it was in one particular night that the pain in his stomach assumed the most unbearable excruciating form ; under its writhing agony he could neither sit nor lie down ; it made him extremely restless. Then he thought he could make himself unconscious of the suffering by merging his mind into Samadhi. But no sooner had he withdrawn the mind from his body and rested a while in Brahma-consciousness, than it was drawn out again to the terrible pain in the stomach. He attempt-

ed over and over again for Samadhi but every time he failed; before his mind could touch even the border land of the Transcendental, his mind was dragged down by the pain. Then Tota got perfectly disgusted with his body. He thought that it was owing to that rotten 'cage of flesh and bone' that his mind had got out of his control. Had he not known it for certain that his real self is not the body, then why this torment and suffering by keeping its association?—he must break that cage and be ever free from all possibility of future sufferings! Let him quit the body by drowning it into the waters of the Ganges.

With this resolve Tota got up from his seat, and having firmly fixed his mind on Brahman slowly entered into the Ganges. He proceeded on and on towards the middle of the stream that he might fully drown himself into its depths, but lo! the river appeared as if it had been dried up! Or could it be that Tota saw but the external reflection of his inner ideas, who can tell! But the fact was that Tota walked right across the Ganges upto the other bank, yet did not find water deep enough to drown himself in. At last when the houses and the trees of the other bank began to appear as shadows in the nocturnal gloom Tota reflected what could that divine Maya be. Alas! there was not sufficient water even in the big Ganges to drown himself in! What a wonderful *Lila* of the Lord was that! But just then he felt a veil was taken off from his mind and his inner eye was dazzled by the glorious vision of the Divine Mother,—he beheld the Mother of Universe, the Mother of infinite, inscrutable Power; the Mother on the land, the Mother in water; the body is the Mother, the mind is the Mother; suffering is the Mother, well-being also is the Mother; knowledge is the Mother, ignorance also is the Mother, life is Mother, death also is the Mother; the Mother is all whatever is seen, whatever is heard,

whatever is thought of, whatever is imagined, all, all is the same Mother ! So long as one remains within this body one has not the power to transcend Her jurisdiction unless She wills it,—one cannot even die ! Then again the same Mother is beyond all body, mind and intellect,—the absolute, transcendental Mother. And that Mother is no other than the same Brahman whom Tota had been worshipping hitherto with all the wealth of his heart's adoration and devotion ! Siva and Shakti exist in the undivided form of Hara and Gouri—Brahman and Its Energy are not separate !

In that dead of night when Tota was blessed with the vision of the immanence of the Divine Mother he lost himself completely in the ecstasy of the vision and made an unstinted dedication of his whole self at Her feet ! Then he came back again across the stream exactly in the same way as he did while going, and went to his seat under the Panchavati. Though still there was the pain of the disease in his body, his mind was so full of the memory of that ecstatic vision that he did not feel it any longer. He passed the rest of the night in meditation and in taking the name of the Divine Mother.

Next morning when the Master came to enquire after the health of Tota, he found the latter quite a changed man ! His face beaming with celestial joy, lips quivering with soft smile, and body as if perfectly free from all ailments ! Tota beckoned him to sit by his side and related to him the whole of the incidents of the previous night. Then he remarked that the disease did the service of a great friend to him. It led him to the revelation of that glorious vision of the Divine Mother and through Her grace he became now perfectly free from disease also. Now he understood how ignorant he had been so long. He further requested the Master to ask his Mother to allow him to go from hence. He now perfectly understood that he had been detained there at Dakshineswar so long by the Mother simply to teach

him this lesson. Otherwise how could it be that in spite of his strong previous desires to go away from Dakshineswar, he could not do that till now ? Sri Ramakrishna was very much pleased to hear of the happenings and said with a smile, "You did not believe in my Mother before. How often did you argue with me, saying that Shakti is false ! But now you have realised yourself and all such doubts about the reality of my Mother have been forever dispelled. The Mother had shown me long before that Brahman and Shakti are not separate, even as fire and its burning power are not!" Next when the rosy dawn was still lavishing its early splendour on the land and the whole of the garden-temple of Dakshineswar was being bathed with the music of the morning concert, both the Guru and the Shishya got up and went to the shrine of the Divine Mother and prostrated themselves before Her sacred image with heart full of profound devotion. Then both felt that the Mother gave Her sanction now for the departure of Tota, and within a few days of this event, after a long stay of eleven months, at last Totapuri left Dakshineswar for good and went away to western India.

One more word about Totapuri and we have finished all we had heard about Totapuri from our Master. Puriji was a believer in Alchemy. Not only he believed but he told the Master that many a time he had himself transmuted actually baser metals like copper into gold. Tota used to say that many old Paramahansas of his denomination knew it through succession of Gurus, and he had learnt it from those old masters. He said further that there had been a strict injunction in the matter that none could make use of it for any selfish end. But when the entire congregation of Sadhus of a particular denomination moved on from one place to another on pilgrimage, the head of the congregation (*Mandaleswara*) could make use of the knowledge for providing for the food and other necessities of the Sadhus of the congregation.

SWAMI SARADANANDA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THROUGH THE EYE OF PSYCHOLOGY*

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THE life of Sri Ramakrishna is an index of the times in which he lived. The religious life of Bengal exhibits three main characteristics : Bhakti worship, Tantric practices, and the decay of traditional religious institutions leading to the birth of a new movement in the form of Brahmo Samaj. Bhakti cult took an emphatic form in the life of Bengal. Representing the relation between the individual and God through the symbol of love is not peculiar to India. Even among the Hebrews it was prevalent as is well evidenced by "the Song of Solomon." In India it is distinctly associated with Krishna cult. In Bengal the Krishna cult had its most extreme form. Even before Sri Ramakrishna this aspect of religious life was emphasised by Chaitanya. Love, in Bengal, superseded all other forms of religious attitude. Side by side with this there has always been the Tantric form of worship. The Tantric worship has always been shrouded in mystery. The ordinary people very often misunderstand the Tantric forms of worship and the Tantric system as a whole provoked a lot of suspicion and also active opposition. In spite of this it is flourishing in Bengal.

Besides these two characteristics we have to notice the third which was entirely the resultant of the contact between the East and the West. Bengal was the earliest to feel the effects of western influences. The traditional religious and social institutions sustained the onslaught of western civilisation. Many of them could not stand the shock. As a result of this the social and religious life of Bengal was undergoing important transformations. Many leaders of thought in Bengal had as their ideal some form of religious compromise which would retain the best elements of Hinduism and Christianity. Such a compromise was offered in the form of Brahmoism. Those that were influenced by western culture

*Notes of a lecture delivered on the occasion of the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore.

readily accepted this form of religion while the masses in Bengal were still deeply immersed in either the Bhakti cult of Vaishnavism or the Tantric cult associated with Kali.

It was in such an intellectual environment that Sri Ramakrishna was born in an obscure village called Kamarpukur in a Brahmin family. His father Khudiram and his mother Chandra exhibited psychic tendencies and were well known for their religious devotion. Gadadhar—that was the name of Sri Ramakrishna—was the youngest of their sons. Even as a boy he inherited this tendency from his parents. With a natural aptitude for æsthetic value, with a keen love for Nature and her beauties, this youth was soon found the centre of the village youths. He was very good at singing. On one occasion he was to have taken part in a village drama ; the part assigned to him was Siva. Just at the psychological moment on the stage he fell into a trance and could not act the part. The party broke up. This incident is an early indication of his future developments as a great yogi. Early in life his father died. He was under the guardianship of his elder brother Ramkumar. This family misfortune may be taken almost as a blessing in disguise. In the case of a budding genius the luxuriant growth is always incompatible with the pruning knife of an overcareful gaurdian. This is well illustrated in the personality of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. John Stuart Mill was always under the leading strings of his father. His father took pride in his precocity and as a boy of twelve he was initiated into the mysteries of higher mathematics. It no doubt helped John Stuart Mill to develop his intellectual capacity to an astounding extent. But he had the misfortune to move in a groove prepared for him by his father. Throughout his life he spent all his intellectual resources in defending a system of philosophy bequeathed to him by his father. Benthamite Utilitarianism he received as his intellectual legacy. And that thwarted his freedom of thought. Thus we have in the person of John Stuart Mill only an ardent defender of his father's philosophy. And he had no reserve of thought to start his own school. As contrasted with this we have Herbert Spencer who lost his father early in life and he was under the guardianship of his uncle. His uncle tried to give him the best education. But Spencer's personality could not breathe the artificial atmosphere of the traditional institutions. He ran away

from the University and intellectually he was a self-made man. This intellectual freedom which he had early in life contributed not a little to his development as the greatest thinker of the age.

Similar was the fortune of Gadadhar who had that freedom early in his life. It helped him to develop his powers untrammelled. The tendencies which were implicit in him were : (1) The supernormal psychic capacity which very often led to the trance state ; (2) Extreme unconventionalism in matters social and religious ; (3) His recognition of religion as a matter of life and not of the intellect. Let us say a few words on each of these.

Gadadhar was taken to Calcutta when his brother accepted the office of priest in Dakshineswar temple. There, Gadadhar was staying with his brother. He was very anxious to educate him on modern lines so that he might be a source of economic strength to the family. But Gadadhar was not intended for that. He hated the very idea of learning for the purpose of earning bread. In this respect he manifested an utter disregard of economic value. Genius in the religious sphere has always been associated with such contempt for values in terms of Rupees, annas and pies. The spirit that rests stable in the realm of eternal values is not to be drawn by inferior attractions. Such was the attitude of Nachiketas when he declined to have the world sovereignty from the God of Death. Such was the attitude of Maitreyi when she declined the bequeathal of property from her lord, Yagnavalkya. Such was the attitude of Jesus when he declined the political throne of the Israelites, and preferred to be crowned with a crown of thorns. Gadadhar's family certainly felt the pinch of poverty. His elder brother Ramkumar who shouldered the responsibilities of the family felt the situation, but Gadadhar would not budge an inch. He would not give up that on which he had set his heart. An uneducated and almost illiterate Brahmin boy even without the traditional knowledge of a temple priest in the matter of religious worship, Sri Ramakrishna had to accept the post of a priest in the Dakshineswar temple. His novel method of performing the Puja, his eccentricities of behaviour within the temple itself, his unconventional ways of singing and dancing, all roused the curiosity of the unsophisticated worshippers. But, undaunted he pursued the same line of development. Sometimes in the

middle of the night he would be seen meditating under a tree by the side of the temple close to the burial ground. He will cast off his clothes and sacred thread while so meditating. For days together he would have no sleep. This kind of life would be certainly unintelligible to the ordinary man in the street. And yet it was an indication of his amphibious existence. He had the privilege of living in two worlds. What was known to the ordinary religious student by mere hearsay, what he learnt from the scriptures, was a matter of living experience with Sri Ramakrishna.

The existence of the other world was recognised by the world's greatest thinkers. Plato in the West and the Upanishadic thinkers in the East have in unmistakable terms spoken of the existence of this world of reality, side by side with the great world of shadows, the world in which the ordinary mortals live. The world of greater reality is perceived by the privileged souls. These privileged souls give the benefit of their experience to the ordinary mortals of the world of sense presentation. The superior wisdom of the religious teacher always pertains to his experience of the other world. That world which is oblivion to many of us would be a living reality to him. Through a sort of secret trap door the religious genius would slip into that world, fully forgetful of the concrete present. The objects which appear to us as very important and material may dwindle into mere shadows for such a personality, and the objects not perceived and unknown to us constitute a living environment to him. It is such a kind of supernormal trance that was constantly experienced by Sri Ramakrishna. To a person who is face to face with ultimate reality, logic is futile and worthless. He need not wait for the inferences of the philosophers and logicians, because he is face to face with the Real which is known only through inference to others. Facts of religion, therefore, were a matter of life for Sri Ramakrishna and he expressed that very often to his friends and disciples.

The next characteristic that we have to notice in his life is the extreme unconventionalism. Conventions, social or religious, always imply established institutions. These are invented for the benefit of the average man. Social solidarity depends upon the strict observance of these conventions. A society without conventions would lead to social anarchy. To prevent such a chaos is the function of the conventions. But

it should not be forgotten that society is a living organism and as such it must not only live, but grow. The conventions and institutions whenever necessary must be modified or replaced by better ones. The function of so modifying the conventions and institutions is the privilege of the leaders of thought. A genius whose sole purpose is to create, will look at the existing institutions from a different point of view. He would fully realise that the Sabbath is intended for man and not man for the Sabbath. One truth he could never afford to forget and that is, that man is an end unto himself and could never be subordinated as a means to something else. One who creates the institutions and the conventions cannot afford to be a slave of the same. He would assert his independence and freedom from conventions. It is only by such self-assertion that a genius can chalk out new lines of life and sketch new modes of thought. And such was the privilege of Sri Ramakrishna throughout his life-time. Even as a young boy when he had to undergo the Upanayanam ceremony he manifested such a unique freedom from conventions when he received his first Bhiksha from one Dhani of the blacksmith caste. This unconventionalism became more manifest during his stay at Dakshineswar. Sometimes according to his own ideas he would modify the mode of worship. Even in the matter of clothing he would be unconventional at times. He would go about nude to have his meditation. This behaviour which may be considered shocking to the pandits of social etiquette fully expresses his deep conviction about the reality of the other world and the shadowy unreality of the concrete. Differences of sex, social status and economic rank are all the result of the body. One who has concentrated on the inner soul of man could not recognise these distinctions brought about by extraneous conditions. The life of the spirit must certainly be in a different direction from the life of the body, and one who has the privilege of living in the spiritual environment need not trouble about social or religious conventions which are intended for the ordinary Philistine of the world. This unconventionalism in Sri Ramakrishna logically led to his conception of religious toleration. He came into contact with Muhammadans and Christians. In order to learn their religion and to appreciate the value thereof he lived like a Muhammadan and a Christian. Instead of trusting to second-hand knowledge from books he wanted to know the

truth first-hand through experience. Thus after living the lives of the Hindu, the Muhammadan and the Christian, he came to the conclusion which stands as the ideal of his teachings as to true worship which knows no barriers of conventional religious denominations. In the eye of God there is no difference between a Hindu or a Muhammadan or a Christian. One who knows the truth and one who lives the true life of religion is certainly deserving of divine grace, irrespective of the accidents of birth, race or religion. This message of religious tolerance stands as the central doctrine of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching. As a matter of experience this is not imbedded in intricate scriptural language. It is open to the ordinary unsophisticated man as well as the cultured members of society ; it requires no great commentator to elucidate the point; it requires no great intellectual discipline to understand the truth. He who has a will to live can live the life of a religious devotee. And love towards God is within the reach of all. From this short survey of his life it is quite clear that Sri Ramakrishna possessed characteristics differentiating him as a great teacher. The privilege of living in the other world, the freedom from social and religious conventions and the creative genius exhibiting a higher idea of toleration, are characteristics which would entitle him to be placed in the same rank with the other world teachers. It is not necessary to emphasise the importance and significance of his message to modern India. The conditions which are peculiar to modern India are conditions which were fully recognised by Sri Ramakrishna himself. Inter-religious suspicion, or animosity, inter-communal bickerings are forces of disintegration, even now operating adversely in the body politic of Indian society. The only way by which such disruptive tendencies can be cured so as to promote national welfare and national unity, is to emphasise the religious teachings of this great personality of modern India. Thus Sri Ramakrishna's teachings would be an influence for national harmony and national greatness.

A. CHAKRAVARTI

GLEANINGS AND COMMENTS

MODERN VIEWS ON THE ORIGIN OF CASTE

WE reproduce below extracts from an informing article on the above subject from the current issue of the *Viswabharati Quarterly*, by Kshitishprasad Chattopadhyay. It is needless to say that the theories mentioned therein are not the last word on the problem, and perhaps even do not point towards the right solution. There is in every society, in addition to and above natural forces, an idealising influence at work which is trying unceasingly to mould, direct and utilise them towards the realisation of a conscious spiritual end. This influence in Hindu society is formulated as the *Varnashrama Dharma*. Investigation into the origin and growth of the caste system cannot with impunity neglect this important factor, if the true solution is to be reached.

“ The two earliest attempts to explain caste on the basis of the existing state of affairs were made by Sir Denzil Ibbettson in the Punjab and Mr. C. J. Nesfield in the United Provinces.

Ibbettson studied the facts available in his province, and he summed up his conclusions about the origin of caste in that area as follows :

(1) At first there was the tribal division common to all primitive societies.

(2) As civilization grew up, the guilds based on hereditary occupations came into existence.

(3) The priests, the Brahmins, in order to preserve their prestige and power, insisted on the hereditary nature of their occupation and the necessity of honouring all persons of priestly descent. This they supported with all the weight of religion, elaborating from the Hindu ideas of cosmogony, a purely artificial set of rules regulating marriage and inter-marriage, and declaring certain kinds of food and occupations as pure, impure or indifferent.

He is however careful to explain that he does not mean that the Brahmins invented the principle which they turned to their own purpose ; on the contrary the rudiments of it are found in all primitive societies and it was only the extraordinary power gained by the Brahmins that led their teaching, probably almost unconsciously, to take the form that tended most effectively to preserve such power unimpaired. One of the difficulties of this hypothesis is, to explain how the Brahmins, or priests, at all acquired such great power in India as to enable them thus to create caste,—a power never enjoyed by priesthood elsewhere in the world. Priests have been faced with the similar difficulty of growing numbers in other places as well. Thus in Kashmir and in Nepal, the Buddhist clergy married and were forced to follow secular pursuits to meet the needs of family life. Consequently they formed a group comparable to the hypothetical group of Brahmins of Ibbettson. Yet,

with the example of India before them, they did not succeed in forming caste among the mass of the people. Similar is the case of the Lamas of Tibet.

The second defect of Ibbettson's theory is, that it does not give any explanation of the curious rules about purity and impurity of certain kinds of food, or of the restrictions about taking food of a particular kind from others.

The other early theorist on caste, Mr. Nesfield, was very much impressed by what he called the fundamental unity of the Indian race. He considered the Indians as homogeneous physically, showing that the handful of Aryan invaders had been absorbed in the vast mass of the aboriginal population leaving no mark on their appearance.

Mr. Nesfield therefore suggested that caste had nothing to do with race, and was developed merely because of the gradual evolution of arts and industries. He points out that at the bottom of the social scale in the United Provinces, came the primitive tribes, next came hunters and fishermen. Then follow the pastoral *Gadariyas* and *Ahirs*, and finally the great mass of agriculturists and artisans, with the lordly Rajaput and the priestly Brahman crowning the whole structure.

Great difficulties however have to be faced by any such evolutionary hypothesis. The question arises that, as the creation of these grades were necessarily slow, and hence the chance of limiting them to definite groups small, whence arose any gradations at all? Why were not such grades formed elsewhere in the world? Further why are they accompanied by such curious rules of marriage and commensality and also of taboos?

The next worker in the field was Sir Herbert Risley, Superintendent of the Ethnological Surveys. The difficulty of explaining the uniqueness of caste in India was suggested by him to be due to the fact that in India alone were the Aryans brought into close contact with an unequivocally black race. Risley points out that the opponents of the Vedic people are called by them black, noseless, coarse-featured, of low stature and so on. He suggests that this gives a fairly accurate anthropological definition of the Dravidian tribes of to-day. He adds that this repulsion due to physical differences was supplemented by disagreement of customs, tribal structure and religion. Risley meets one objection, which immediately occurs, that while the principle in question may possibly apply to the major groups, it fails to account for the vast net-work of intricate divisions which the caste system now presents; for the differences of type which distinguish the various trading, agricultural, pastoral and fishing castes from each other, are hardly sharp enough to have brought the sentiment of race antipathy into play.

Risley's reply to this is that the numerous smaller groups came into being under the influence of the fiction that men who speak a different language, who dwell in a different district, who worship different gods, who observe different social customs, who follow a different profession, or practice the same profession in a slightly different way, must be of a fundamentally different race.

I shall here state merely two of the pieces of evidence brought against Risley's view. First of all, Aryans could legally take non-Aryan wives, for which there were definite rules ; secondly, the issue of these marriages after intermarrying with the Aryans for seven generations could become pure Aryans. It need hardly be emphasised that such rules do not betray an extraordinary horror of the hypothetical black aborigines.

The next worker in the field, M. Senart, suggests that the uniqueness of the development of caste in India was the result of physical isolation. Parallel developments, he points out, had occurred in Greece and Rome. He shows that the *curiae* in Rome, the *phratry* in Greece and the *gotra* of India closely correspond. The bounds of exogamy existed, and membership of *phratries*, as of *gotras*, was limited to offsprings of families belonging to the group. He also shows that occupation was to some extent hereditary in these places. The strange rules barring commensality likewise find parallels elsewhere. The food cooked at the sacred fire symbolised the unity of the family and the religious sentiment attached to it is the explanation of the rules of the table. The expulsion of an offender from caste by solemnly pouring out water from his vessel after filling it and the modern stopping of *hukka* and *pani* are similar to the interdiction of fire and water in Rome, while the body that wields sway, the *panchayat*, was undoubtedly paralleled in the ancient councils of tribes in Greece, Rome, Germany and elsewhere.

His hypothesis is that the Aryan invaders of India had already in them the germs of caste system. To this basic factor were added the facts of hostile contact with a race of different colour and physique and of inferior culture. This opposition, the consequent need of security, the contempt of the vanquished,—all these increased the native arrogance of the invaders and reinforced the several beliefs and prejudices which guarded from intermixture the sections into which they were divided.

Further, the vastness of the country tended to separate the groups and to multiply divisions. As difficulties diminished, and a more settled form of social life grew up, the need for artisans was sharply felt everywhere, and these being in wide demand, were widely scattered. In the pursuit of their profession they had to come in intimate contact with the aboriginal people and some admixture undoubtedly resulted.

When later on some kind of examination was instituted about purity of descent, the priests who, by reason of the privileges they had gained owing to the growing complexity of rites and ceremonies, had been able better to conserve their purity of descent, claimed and obtained the highest rank, albeit sharing it with the royal races.

The artisans originally of the same stock but now under the ban of intermixture, sank in position and finally became still more diluted with aboriginal blood.

In Senart's hypothesis two things are assumed :

(1) That the Aryans—in the sense of Vedic people—were highly superior to the people they found in India, represented by jungle tribes at the present time.

(2) That the caste structure is essentially the same all over India. Both these assumptions are unjustified.

If an invading people come into a country in fairly large numbers, what happens is, that, the earlier people are driven into what might be termed safety pockets,—places in the country which allow of a fair livelihood, but which are difficult of access to invaders. In India, there are some such places, and the chief among them in North India are Nepal and Assam.

If therefore, the people of the plains were driven out by the incoming Aryan tide, we should expect to find remnants of that culture in these places. Investigation shows that such is actually the case, but it also definitely brings out that their culture were not so inferior as has been made out by Senart and others, and also that these earlier people were themselves an intermixture with some fine-featured race. So far as the careful observation of trained observers go, they agree that the high castes in these places have undoubtedly Caucasian features, although Mongolian admixtures occur. The characteristics of their culture show that they passed through India.

We have therefore to admit that the so-called Aryans were preceded by a fine-featured, cultured race in India. Now, the remnants of this migration into Nepal and Assam show definitely that while guilds were developed in their society, and the cultured invaders tended to preserve their racial purity, caste did not evolve. Secondly the peculiar rules about commensality are absent to a large extent.

One conclusion, however, emerges definitely from an analysis of social structure in different parts of India. It is that there were migrations of culture to India before the Vedic Aryans came and that, roughly at least, these correspond to the culture remnants found in Nepal and Assam.

It is not possible to indicate within the limits of this paper the points of agreement I have been able to detect. I should like however to point out two facts :

(1) That the food and drink used by one at least, of the earlier migrations differed distinctively from that of the later Aryan migration.

(2) That the rules of marriage were comparatively simple and elastic. Divorce was easy and widow-marriage permitted. That among the common people whom they influenced the relation of the sexes before marriage was similar to the present state of affairs in the Munda and Oraon community, conception being usually followed by marriage.

I therefore suggest that the inception of caste was due to the hostile contact of a later cultured people, presumably the Vedic Aryans, with an earlier cultured race. In the struggle for existence that ensued, each group sought to increase its man-power by enlisting the aboriginal

population as far as possible on its side. Analysis of the cultures show that while one had the advantage of the earlier settlement and greater experience of the country and its people, the other balanced it to a large extent by greater numbers and their superior knowledge of certain arts.

In order to influence and enlist the comparatively primitive aborigines, it was necessary to benefit them to some extent ; for this reason, and also to utilise them properly, they had to be taught some at least of the arts that were brought by the migrants. It was, at the same time equally important to prevent a leakage of such knowledge to the opposite camp and to the people in general. The general sentiment of contempt that a half civilized people feel, after contact with a superior culture, for their own uncultured brethren, probably supplied a powerful check. But the most effective limit was found in :

(1) The wide difference of food used by the rival peoples, the same substance being taboo to one people, indifferent to the others.

(2) The difference in the religious belief and the gods worshipped.

(3) The opposite character of the relations of the sexes among the two sets of people one tending towards easy union, the other towards immolating the widow with her deceased husband.

I suggest that these were consciously or unconsciously moulded into rigid bars about the groups that were formed. The vastness of the country as Senart opines, led to scattering, consequently there was greater difficulty of self-preservation, adding thereby to the stringency of the safe-guards. On this hypothesis the smaller local caste groups (sub-castes) were the first to grow, being later classed as one caste on the common basis of occupation and tradition.

Such a multiple migration hypothesis of caste overcomes the difficulty of diversity in the social structure in different parts of India. For on analysis it appears that there were two to three distinct culture migrations in most parts of India, before history proper begins ; now although caste might originate by hostile contact between two cultures, there was no reason why the same migrants should triumph in every part of the country.

Further, the third migration might have brought in other new elements. Consequently, the problem is reduced to analysing the different social structures in different parts of India and reconstructing therefrom the different cultural migrations. "

CASTE AND OCCUPATION

It may be assumed that the four main castes or divisions of the Hindu society had their origin in the division of functions. It may be easily conceded that in the course of its long history and coming into contact with other peoples and civilizations and probably as the result of competition, as opposed to co-operation which operated in the early

stages of the Hindu society, the originally conceived functions of the four castes ceased to operate. Judged by the social life of the people in the Buddhistic Age as given in the *Jatakas* (see the valuable articles in the *Modern Review* by X), we find that the Brahmins followed the most diverse occupations in those days, that there were Brahmin husbandmen who ploughed their fields with oxen, that Brahmin farmers cultivated their lands with hired labourers, that Brahmin carpenters gained their livelihood by making carts and that there were Brahmin goat-herds and snake charmers and so on. A study of the social life in the Buddhist Age should be full of suggestions to the Brahmins and the higher castes generally at the present day who while loudly complaining of unemployment, make no effort to help themselves by following the business of agriculture. They must needs hang about offices in search of clerical appointments which do not even give them a living wage, while more remunerative work is awaiting them in the field. False pride and disinclination to manual work of any kind operate with disastrous results.

A. S.

GURU AND DISCIPLE

SWAMI GHANANANDA

GURU AS THE LIVING VOICE IN RELIGION

RARE indeed is the privilege that man possesses in having access to the knowledge of the past and in claiming and availing himself of it to further his progress. In the realms of the sciences, the arts and the humanities he inherits rich and precious stores bequeathed to him by his ancestors and it behoves him to draw from them, add to them and leave a richer harvest of knowledge for his posterity to reap.

The wisdom of by-gone ages has come down to us not only in the fields secular but also in the fields spiritual. It has been handed down from generation to generation by rote or by writing. A stream of such knowledge has been flowing from out of the sources of the past for ages and ages, and the self-same stream made richer, deeper and broader by small or great tributaries is sure to flow through the valley of the future making the world brighter and happier than ever before.

Yield as it may all its secrets and truths, the past cannot yield the secrets and the truths which the living voice alone can reveal. This voice has to be sought for in a living personality, heard, and understood by those who want to understand, in a being who has embodied in himself all virtues and excellences of life. Educationists ancient and modern have been aware of this fact. The presence which strengthens and inspires and the illumination which brightens and kindles the inner fire are to be found only in the living personality. In teaching the book of life, he alone can throw a rare light on many of its obscure pages and reveal in them their true meaning. Its spiritual chapters will be beyond man's ken if they are not taught by him. The Guru or the Spiritual Master is the living voice of spirituality. He is the personification of Truth and transcends all limitations of caste, creed, and colour.

INDIA AS THE FIRST DISCOVERER OF THE GURU'S GREATNESS

Of all countries in the world it was given to India to first discover the supreme value of the living voice in religion and learn how to respect and revere, nay even adore and worship

the spiritual master. Even in pre-historic days, even in times when many other countries like England, Europe, and America were being inhabited by ill-clad and ignorant primitive men without the light and the sweetness of life, long before the dawn and the spread of civilisation in the west, boldly did India declare as the fruit of her experience in the search after truth :

“ This Atman cannot be attained by the study of the Vedas, nor by intellect, nor even by much hearing of the sacred scriptures.”

“ This knowledge which thou hast obtained, is not attained by mere argumentation ; it becomes easy of comprehension, indeed, O dearest, when taught by another. ”

“ Arise, awake, (O, man) ! realise (that Atman) having the excellent (teachers). ”

The Hindus have been following these precepts from very ancient times. They believe that all spiritual knowledge is attainable only through the grace and blessings of the Guru. They accordingly honour and worship him before they begin to do anything auspicious. They believe that even worship of God and meditation on Him can be begun only after worshipping and meditating on the Guru. They dedicate their thoughts, holy words and pious deeds to him. In their eyes, the Guru and God are one.

THE GURU AS THE GUIDE IN THE LIFE SPIRITUAL

The system of teaching and learning religious worship and practices prevalent among the Aryans and applicable in a general way to all religions of the world has been aptly likened to the system of treatment that obtains in Ayurveda. In the latter, four factors are essential for the successful treatment of a disease. They are physician, medicine, nurse, and patient. The physician must be capable of making a correct diagnosis of his patient's ailment, the medicine should be appropriate and powerful, the nurse must be dutiful, and the patient careful of his health and possessed of faith in his physician. In Bhavaroga or the disease of the mind, four essential factors contribute to the successful treatment. The patient is the man who convinced of the existence of the disease which has overtaken him, is anxious to be cured ; Bhakti, or devotion, is his nurse ; the Guru or Teacher is he who can properly diagnose the particular form of the patient's illness,

and impart to him the proper medicine, that is, give him spiritual initiation, which has the potency to heal.

Far more obstinate and difficult of cure is the disease of the mind than the disease of the body. The one is in the province of the tangible and the perceptible ; the other in that of the superphysical, and the supersensual. The latter is the outcome of thousands of complications brought about in the course of myriads of births and deaths. The average man, the man in the street in the work-a-day world, is mostly unconscious of this disease and therefore does not feel the need for spirituality. He does not feel impelled to ask the question of all questions " Whence do we come ? Whither do we go ? " and much less does he know its answer. He merely lives on, pecking now a sweet fruit, now a bitter one, from a branch of the tree of life. Even in those rare moments when he becomes aware and convinced of his disease, he fails to evince sufficient and genuine earnestness to call for the help and advice of spiritual instructors.

But the questioning man studies the scriptures and the philosophies and tries to find an answer to the problems of life and death. He comes to believe he has a soul and there is a Power over him ; but he finds he has not attained the truth of life, the peace which passeth all understanding. He then desires to know, feel and realise for himself the truths embodied in the scriptures of his religion. He tries to practise them to a small extent ; but the ocean of the knowledge of the divine is so deep and wide, that he is like a little helpless ferry plying through its tossing and tempestuous waves in the growing darkness of night. The Guru or the Spiritual Guide alone can safely take him across to the other shore.

THE TEACHER AND THE ASPIRANT

Well has it been said : " Knock and it shall open. " Nature creates wants in us, and also provides for fulfilling them. Hunger, thirst, curiosity, desire,—all these are the outcome of nature's promptings within us, and nature furnishes us also with the means of satisfying these. What we desire we attain. We need only attempt sincerely for it. A boy's mind is moved by curiosity for something, and this is gratified by his knowing about or getting at it. When man receives blows on the anvil of life, he yearns for freedom, for peace, for truth. Books give him only the intellectual comprehen-

sion of them ; but it is from an external impulse that the quickening of his spirit comes. He who gives this impulse is the Teacher ; he who receives is the disciple. The seeking man meets the seeking master and Truth is imparted and realised.

Truth shines of itself and stands on its own evidence. When a Teacher of mankind comes, the world instinctively bows down and worships him. Such Teachers are the Incarnations of the Divine. They are few and far between. Help has to be taken from lesser personalities—souls who are free and illumined. These latter cannot be easily distinguished by all from the ordinary teachers.

Many seekers grope in the dark and are unable to discover a guru. He possesses some rare qualifications which confer on him the right to accept a disciple. Firstly, he must know the spirit of the scriptures. He need not necessarily possess scholarship but must know the essence of religious texts ; for mere scholarship is a matter of the intellect and is not a test of intuition and spirituality. Secondly, the guru should be of an absolutely pure character. He is unlike the teacher of any intellectual subject wherein personality does not count. He should be absolutely sinless, because it is from his personality that he has to impart to the disciple a spiritual impetus which forms the secret of all initiation and gives a rare value to it. Thirdly, the guru should be absolutely unselfish. He is one who is full of love and compassion for man. He does his work out of his mercy. He has no axe to grind of his own. There is no bartering in religion and the guru has no attraction for lucre.

SHOULD YOU CHOOSE A GURU ?

Thousands there are who believe that they should accept a guru and receive initiation into the spiritual life from him to enable them to make their spiritual progress possible and easy : there are also thousands who do not so believe. The opinions and beliefs of the former are in favour of the Hindu tradition regarding the acceptance of a guru ; whereas the latter either accept the tradition partially or wholly reject it. Many of those who study the Vedas, the Upanishads and other scriptures either by themselves or with the help of a scholar take up some method of prayer, worship and meditation which they like best, and follow it in practice. They

do not acknowledge the necessity for a Guru, or if they do it at all, do not believe their accepting him as indispensably necessary though the Scriptures themselves declare such necessity. A few others hope that as God is omniscient, He will surely grant their prayers.

It might be asked whether the tradition that a Guru has to be accepted by a spiritual aspirant for his initiation and progress stands to reason. The answer to this is in the affirmative. Firstly, even a student of the secular sciences (*Aparāvidyā*) feels the need for a teacher who will propound and explain them and remove his doubts. It is no wonder, therefore, that in a subtler and more difficult subject like the spiritual an aspirant has to look forward to a Guru for learning and understanding the mystery of life and for acquiring the knowledge of the divine. Comprehension becomes quicker and clearer, and progress easier and more rapid when he accepts a Guru. Secondly, the Teacher takes a personal and lively interest in the efforts of the disciple at doing sadhana, helps him in all possible ways and serves as a living example of success in spiritual life, and as a source of constant encouragement, love and inspiration. Thirdly, the Guru himself possesses an intimate knowledge of the ways and means of reaching the goal, is well aware of the difficulties that beset the path of sadhana of a disciple, and can therefore warn him and guide him safely to his haven. Fourthly, obedience to a Guru conduces to the growth and to the ultimate freedom of the disciple, restrains his mind from traversing unsafe courses and concentrates it on the one aim and purpose of his life. Fifthly, a true Guru (*Siddha Guru*) is full of love divine, of compassion for all beings, and of extraordinary purity, peace and selflessness, and without the slightest taint of the desire for fame or name. The disciple cannot but be benefitted by living under the guidance of such a great personality, if he possesses faith and devotion to him. Sixthly, when a Guru initiates an aspirant who requests to be led by him, he imparts a certain spiritual power as the fruit of his own long and strenuous *sadhana* (religious practice) which enables the disciple to live a new life altogether, and shake off the bondage of the senses, mind, family, and society, and soar aloft like a free bird in spiritual heights. By doing services to the Guru which draw the mind to him, the disciple advances in the new life and makes rapid strides in his progress. Seventhly, the

Guru employs such spiritual means and methods like the giving of a proper *mantra* and so forth as are most suited to the temperaments and tendencies of the disciple. Eighthly, the Guru takes upon himself the burden of responsibility in setting aright the disciple, by means of methods both external and spiritual, if perchance he goes astray. The injunctions of the scriptures and the experience of saints and sages also strengthen the position of those who believe in a Guru. Says the Sruti :

“ In order to know Him, the disciple with pieces of fire-wood (for *Yagna*) on his hand should go to a Guru who is well-versed in the Vedas and has supreme devotion to God. ”

“ He who has deep devotion to the Supreme Soul and has equal devotion to his Guru, within the heart of that great man bloom forth the truths taught by the Sastras. ”

The Tantra declares :—

“ He who has not been initiated cannot acquire Divine Knowledge, and cannot gain a desirable state after death. Hence it is that one should, by all means, get himself initiated by a Guru. ”

“ As iron is transmuted into gold when it is penetrated by Rasendra (great fluid), even so is the individual ego converted into Divinity by initiation. His Karma being burnt by the fire of initiation he becomes freed from the bondage of Karma, and thus the fetters of Karma being removed the Jiva (soul) becomes Siva. ”

THE EBB OF INDIAN SPIRITUALITY

Like attracts like : knowledge evokes knowledge ; and ignorance begets ignorance. The fall of the Guru and his standard spiritual brings about the fall of the disciple. The Guru, in days of yore, was honoured and worshipped for his spirituality ; and the same reverence was paid to his descendants in his memory. Reverence was continued to be paid and accepted even when the descendants were unworthy of it, for the disciples' erstwhile lofty ideals became low, and the spiritual teachers had nothing left save a tradition. The result soon followed. Indian spirituality fell, and with it all its glories and all its triumphs. Religion lost its life and was buried under a mass of forms without a meaning.

The decadent Kula-guru (family-guru) is a living picture of this fall. Neither does he live the spiritual life nor does he possess the spiritual power, but nevertheless wants

to command respect from society. Aptly has it been observed that a Kula-guru is like an officer in a kingdom. When the revenue officers of a kingdom misappropriate the revenues collected from the people, the king's wrath comes upon them, he appoints new officers and makes a new law ; but if the people continue to pay the revenue to the officers already punished, not knowing or not obeying the new law, they are also liable to suffer for it. Be it remembered that the King of Kings is watching those who profess to guide men spiritually and also those who allow themselves to be so led. His wrath causes the wane or loss of spirituality in the land.

There is a thrill of devotion which a *Sishya* (disciple) feels for his Guru and which meets with an adequate response from the latter. This none save master and disciple know. So long as this devotion lasts, Hinduism is secure. Such devotion makes seers and heroes of men. Such devotion transforms life. Such devotion creates empires and builds nations. If it is true that of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of the human race, none, certainly is more potent than that the manifestation of which we call by the name of religion, then it is also true that a spiritual awakening in our land which follows in the wake of illuminating teachers and enlightened disciples in a consummation devoutly to be wished.

SWAMI GHANANANDA

NOTES OF THE MONTH

THE COSMIC PLAY

THE best answer to why God created the world was perhaps given by the Vedanta philosophy in its famous aphorism, '*Lokavattu lilakaivalyam*,' (Brahman's creative activity is mere sport, such as we see in ordinary life). For, God being endowed with all perfections knows no wants, nor has He any personal ends to be fulfilled through creative efforts. Verily it is all His *lila*, the Lord only plays ! Other answers also were sought for the question. Some said that the world was meant to be a training ground for the recalcitrant *jivas*, that they, seasoned and chastened by its rude blows and buffets, might at last arrive at the feet of God in absolute surrender to His will. Though the answer is a great solace to the struggling soul in its hours of darkness, it yet fails to satisfy more acute enquiry. For with good reasons it may be retorted that the *jivas* who before being thrown into the mad whirlpool of the *Samsara* were as pure and perfect as God Himself, did not require this gratuitous education. This is really unanswerable. And the only position one can take without great violence to one's reason is, to look upon the whole affair as a play of the Lord,—this vast universe as the playground where He is sporting with the souls.

But every game has its rules. What rules pertain to this Cosmic Game ? If we must meet the Lord in play, we must acquaint ourselves with its laws, and sport with Him accordingly. What are those laws ?

It is said of the beginning of creation in the Upanishads that Brahman felt He was alone and He desired to become many and therefore He willed Himself into this variegated universe. Realisation of diversity is the primal motive of creation. Therefore from moment to

moment the world is passing through incessant changes, and nowhere in the vast universe is there any repetition. No man is a copy of his neighbour, and no two things are ever alike. The Lord has created infinite things, He has made Himself into many, that through these infinite variations He may manifest Himself in His infinite moods and aspects. In the heart of every being abides a new mystery of the Lord, and the glory of that joyous secret is absolutely its own. Thus has He crowned even the meanest and the lowliest with the uniqueness of His divine grace. The worst sinner stands on the same pedestal as the holiest saint. In the eye of the Player, enshrined in the heart of every created thing, there is no high, no low. Each is equally dear to His heart, for what one can offer Him, others cannot. 'Great' and 'small' are man's words, to God they convey no meaning, and He is eagerly waiting for the gift of every life, however mean or low. Very beautifully has Emerson brought out this idea in his poem, '*The Mountain and the Squirrel*' :

"The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter 'Little prig'.
Bun replied,
'You are doubtless very big ;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry ;
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.

Talents differ ; all is well and wisely put ;
 If I cannot carry forest on my back,
 Neither can you crack a nut. ' ”

But man has been very slow to understand and accept this fact. Man has failed to see things as God sees them. To him the diversity has been a cause of grief and misery,—diversity of things has proved a source of differences to him, and he has not attached equal spiritual value to all things. Certain things and beings he has considered as of the greatest value, while to others, he has been indifferent, and yet other things he has considered as of the devil himself. Thus he has condemned the will of God and not praised and cherished it. Here and there certain manifestations he has acclaimed as of God. And he has called them “ Divine Incarnations. ” But are not all things Lord incarnate ? Then, why this difference ? If we fail to see in all things the Shining Face of God, it is not because He is not there but because we are blind. Again, the greatness and glory that we recognise in a Buddha or Jesus as the very expression of the Divine, is no accident. It is the culmination of an upward struggle throughout ages until it burst into the sight of man as the Divine revealed. But even so is every being working its way up, breaking down barriers that are blocking its path and clouding its celestial light, and will one day regain its pristine glory. The little blade of grass, lying on the wayside, is also waiting its auspicious hour of fruition, through the yet coming infinite ages of evolution.

But perchance this also is but a half truth. For what are ‘manifestation’ and ‘potentiality’ ?—They but speak of man’s inherent blindness. For is not God there in all His power and majesty already in the blade of grass ? What then do we mean by evolution and manifestation ? The full truth is that everything is a per-

fect embodiment of God, effulgent with His light, could we but see it,—could we but throw off the false standards of value with which we judge, and approach all things with an unprejudiced mind !

But if man has been stubborn and blind, God has not slept. If we read history aright, we shall find that this outlook, this vision of the Divine, is slowly and gradually growing clearer and clearer to humanity through the vicissitudes of cultures and civilisations. It has been said that the ideals of men taken collectively fall under four broad heads. These, in our own terms are, *Brahmana* (priestly), *Kshatriya* (military), *Vaishya* (commercial), and *Sudra* (labour). Now history surely records the gradual initiation of man into these ideals one by one. The earliest civilisations were decidedly priest-ridden. Slowly, however, the priestly ideal gave way to, or rather accommodated itself with, the growing ideal of the *Kshatriya*. Then came the commercial ideal into power. And the present age is witnessing the coming in of the *Sudra* ideal. What does this evolution mean ? What does it point to ? It indicates that all ideals, all the dreams that humanity has dreamt,—and they are nothing but the fore-shadowing of the Divine *lila* in the hearts of men,—must have equal place and consideration : the *Brahmanic* ideal is not superior to the *Sudra* ideal ; nor is the military any way higher than the commercial ideal. It is the realisation of spiritual democracy, the acceptance by man of the will of God. It means man must realise the purpose of God in creation and live and act accordingly.

Therefore the message imparted in the beginning of the present age has been that of the Harmony of Religions. Religion is conventionally looked upon to be contrary to things secular. But that is an erroneous view. In man's life, nothing is secular, everything is spiritual ;

for do not all our thoughts and actions consciously or unconsciously tend towards the one only goal, Self-realisation? Harmony of Religions therefore means the harmony and synthesis of all diversities of life's manifestations. That view of life and religion, we concede, will take a long long time to be fully accepted and acted upon. For even in religion which at least has been all along known and considered as directly pertaining to God, have been created innumerable factions and differences. Not all religions are true, some are certainly prompted by devils, others are but half-truths,—so it is said. Therefore, we must begin with the harmonisation of what we conventionally call religions. When that has been achieved, we shall come to perceive that they are all equally manifestations of God and that all men and things are divine, and the Cosmic Play will stand revealed in all its glorious beauty.

We can truly realise the spirit of religious harmony only by looking upon religions as expressions of the Divine. This will be readily granted. But the acceptance of this implies that the lives in and through which religion is expressing itself are equally the manifestations of God. And there is no life, no being, in which religion in its true and wider meaning, does not exist. That is why to Sri Ramakrishna's message of the Harmony of Religions followed as a necessary corollary Swamiji's message of the Service of Man as God. Such constant service of the Divine in man will clear the spiritual vision and the whole universe will appear as the very playground of God, wherein He is masquerading under infinitely variegated garbs.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CIVILIZATION'S DEADLOCKS AND THE KEYS, by Annie Besant, D. L.
The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. Price Rs. 1-4-0.

These comprise of five lectures delivered by Dr. Besant in London in 1924 and form a sequel to the series of lectures entitled "The Changing World" delivered by Dr. Besant, also in London in 1909. In those lectures, the learned Doctor tried to show that in all the great departments of human life the old methods were showing signs of being outworn, that whether we looked at religion, at science, at art or at the organisation of society in the Western world, it was found that things were coming to a point where continuance along the same road was practically impossible. With a view to avoid the deadlocks in modern civilisation, Dr. Besant has discussed in the series of lectures under notice, the possibilities that are opening before the present generation in the different lines of human life and of human activity for the advancement of the human race. For example, the author discusses what will be the religion of the future, the relations of religions to each other in that future, and the possibilities of further evolution. Other fields of human activity are similarly discussed. The lectures form a valuable contribution to the great problem of world reconstruction, and whatever differences of opinion we may have on the suggested solution of the world problems—the keys as the author calls it—it must be recognised that the author has made a serious attempt to study them and offered ample food for thought and reflection.

LIFE, LIGHT AND LOVE OR GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS, by Swami Sat-chidananda, 19, Bangaru Naicken Street, Mount Road, Madras.
Price As. 2.

The booklet purports to be a record of the author's meditations on the Self and methods of Its realisation. The author has also published a small Sanskrit pamphlet containing 108 sentences descriptive of the *Atman* from the Advaita standpoint. It can be had of him on application with an one anna stamp.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON INDIA AND HER PROBLEMS. Compiled by Swami Nirvedananda. Published from the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 6-A, Bankarai Street, Calcutta. Price As. 8.

The most obvious thing that strikes an observer of the state of affairs prevailing at the present day in India is the great chaos in the world of ideas and ideals, and methods and means adopted by the various leaders and organisations for the regeneration of the Motherland. A sad lack of understanding of India's past and her mission in the future, and the want of well-defined ideals and methods of work and of a strong machine which would conserve energy and stand ages of

sustained work, have been responsible for the enormous waste of national energy which is being frittered away in spasmodic efforts at tit-bits of reforms. A clear knowledge of the source of the strength and vitality of India, the Mission to which it points, and a right understanding of the ways and means for its realisation, and of how the various discordant elements of the country are to be harmonised, are the pressing needs of India at the present day. We therefore welcome with great pleasure this small but comprehensive collection of Swami Vivekananda's utterances on those great national problems. The gleanings are all arranged in chapters according to topics, each heading clearly setting forth the Swamiji's ideas on that special topic, and all the chapters together forming a comprehensive whole. All important problems have been touched in the book such as India's greatness and glory in the past, her characteristic traits and her mission in the future, national workers—their drawbacks and what they require, training of national workers, deluging the land with spiritual ideas, methods of social reform, education of the masses and women, solution of the caste problem, preservation and expansion of the Indian culture, and plans of a world-wide mission for the spiritual education of the other races. We hope the book will be welcomed by all servants of the Motherland as a guide and text-book which should be always in their hands.

RAMBLES IN VEDĀNTA, by B. R. Rajam Aiyar. Published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. Price Rs. 5.

It was we think the Swami Vivekananda who said that the greatness of Hinduism was to be seen in the daily life of the Hindus, who were gods upon earth. The reason was not far to seek. The greatest truths of Hinduism as taught in the immortal Upanishads were popularised in the Puranas and the Itihāsas which at once taught man how to live in order that he may realise God. It is well known what great hold the Puranas and the Itihāsas had on the people and to what extent they shaped the conduct of the people. Mr. Rajam Aiyar was well versed in Puranic lore and came under the influence of the highly ethical and spiritual standards set by it and he lived the life. A real Vedantin and a devout householder, he exemplified in his simple noble life the truth that to live in the world and to be out of it was the true test of renunciation. His life motto was to *be* good, not so much to *do* good. A brilliant graduate of the Madras University, poet, philosopher and mystic by training and temperament, he gave to the world in the all too brief period of his editorship of the *Prabuddha Bharata* (Awakened India)—1896-1898, highly suggestive and soul-stirring written talks on the Vedānta. These essays which were contributed to the *Prabuddha Bharata* under various *nom de plumes*, were after the death of Mr. Rajam Aiyar at the early age of 26 collected and published under the name of "Rambles in Vedānta." The chief merit of Mr. Rajam Aiyar's writings is that he has throughout attempted, need we say that he has succeeded in an eminent degree, to present the Vedānta in its purest and simplest form without losing sight of its essentially human and poetic interest, taking care at the same time to remove the several misconceptions which had gathered

round it. The Rambles cover a wide field and should appeal equally to the orthodox Hindu as well as to the most advanced thinker, to the young and old alike, in fact to all who are genuinely seeking God. The author's sketches of seekers after God, such as Nanda the Pariah Saint, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a few others are some of the best and most illuminating in the volume before us. For some time, the 'Rambles' has been out of print and numerous were the enquiries made for it. Mr. Ganesan deserves the warmest thanks of a grateful reading public for bringing out the present edition which we heartily welcome. The book is neatly printed and beautifully got up by the Vasanta Press, Adyar.

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LIFE OF NAG MAHASAYA (in Malayalam) : Published by the Prabuddha Keralam Office, Yogananda Ashrama, Alleppey, Price 14 as.

It is a translation of the biography of Nag Mahashaya published in English by ourselves. Nag Mahashaya, the great householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, was a blazing fire of renunciation in the midst of *Kamini-Kanchana*, and has shown to the modern world that God-realization is possible even in the life of the householder, if he has got *Viveka* and *Vairagya*. The book is a valuable acquisition to the religious literature in Malayalam and is written in a simple, chaste and direct style understandable even by the commonest man.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

A greater peace reigned in the hearts of men and a clearer sense of harmony dawned on their minds, and the world was nearer to its ideal of unity and love during the last week of February and the week following than at any other times of the year. For it was in this time of the year eighty-nine years ago, that Sri Ramakrishna was born in a lowly hut of a distant village of Bengal,—he who was the very embodiment of Harmony and Peace, and who symbolised in himself the unity that exists between man and man. Since then, millions of devout souls in all parts of the world have been meditating lovingly on the Truth that he is, and many, many more millions, in remembrance of the day that ushered him into the ken of men. In many towns and villages in India and elsewhere, men assembled in his holy name to celebrate his birthday, and for a time at least forgot differences of caste, colour and creed, and our sorely troubled earth knew partial respite from ugly communal strifes that usually disturb her peaceful surface. Happily for the world, the Ideal is daily extending its sphere of influence and very soon we hope the world at large will realise that wisdom and salvation consists in accepting the same.

AT MADRAS

The public celebration of the anniversary took place at the Madras Math, on Sunday, the 8th March. The programme consisted of Bhajana, Feeding the Poor-Narayanas, Harikatha Kalakshepam, Tamil and English lectures on Sri Ramakrishna. A large gathering of devotees attended the functions.

About 2,500 poor-Narayanas were sumptuously fed and given clothes in the noon. After the Kalakshepam, Mr. T. S. Krishna Rao, an old student of the R. K. Mission Students' Home, read a paper in Tamil on 'The Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.' The speaker described the main incidents of his life and pointed out his chief characteristics as a great world-teacher.

Prof. A. Chakravarthi of the Madras Presidency College then delivered an interesting lecture on 'The Psychological Aspect of Sri Ramakrishna's Life,' a report of which we publish elsewhere. Owing to the unavoidable absence of the Hon'ble Mr. Justice V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, Swami Sharvanandaji introduced the speaker. In his concluding remarks he feelingly dwelt on the sad state of religion in India, which has come to mean for the majority of people mere conformity to conventions. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar then proposed a vote of thanks to the lecturer and with the distribution of Prasadam, the functions of the day came to an end.

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REPORT OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, PATNA

We have received the first general report of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Patna, covering the period, June, 1922, to December, 1924.

The Ashram was started in June, 1922, in a small rented house at Moradpur, Patna, and has since been carrying on its work in three different directions : (a) Missionary, (b) Philanthropic and (c) Educational. In the first direction, the Ashram's activity consisted of ten classes a week on different Hindu scriptures as well as Swamiji's works and works on Sri Ramakrishna, the total number within the years under review coming to as many as 910 classes. The Ashram also celebrated the birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and held music classes and *Bhajan* parties in different parts of the town. Its philanthropic activity again, is not inconsiderable. In addition to providing free nursing to the diseased in the locality, it did very substantial work during the North Bengal Flood in 1922, Patna and Sahabad Flood in 1923, and Bhagalpur Kushi Flood in 1924. The most important items of their activity in the line of education is the organisation of an association of boys called the Vivekananda Boys' Association, with a view to supplementing their imperfect school education by imparting moral, physical, æsthetic and intellectual education through it during their hours of recreation, and of the Turiyananda Library for the benefit of the public to whom about 2,000 books were issued during the period.

The financial condition of the Ashram requires great improvement, being as it is at present dependent on public subscriptions for its maintenance. The Ashram has been doing very excellent and useful work, and its popularity and influence, we know, is daily growing. We hope the public will come forward with liberal help towards the fulfilment of its immediate need which is a spacious house in a suitable locality, so that the Ashram authorities may realise their plan of having (a) a Meditation Room for the use of the public, (b) a Charitable Outdoor Dispensary, (c) a Library and a Reading Room, (d) a Students' Home, and (e) a Home for the Vivekananda Boys' Association, organised on sound and permanent basis.

Contributions may be sent to Sjt. Mathuranath Sinha, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, P. O. Moradpur, Patna, Behar.

SWAMI VIPULANANDAJI IN CEYLON

Swami Vipulanandaji who had gone to Ceylon last December to organise the work of our Mission there, had been on an extensive tour during the last two months through some of the prominent places of the Island. His permanent centre of work at present is the beautiful little port town of Trincomalee from where he is trying to improve the education of East Ceylon. He is an accomplished Tamil scholar and the revival of Tamil language and literature is a fond desire of his heart. His activities have already created a great enthusiasm among the youth and the thoughtful of the various towns he visited.

VEDANT RESARI

A correspondent writes that Swami Vipulanandaji arrived in Colombo on the 9th February, and was met at the Railway Station by many friends and devotees among whom were the Honorary Secretaries of the Vivekananda Society, the Hindu Dharma Samaj and the Tirukkural Kalagam of Colombo. On the 11th the Swami delivered a public lecture in Tamil on "Nataraja" at the Vivekananda Society Hall. On the 13th the members of the "Tirukkural Kalagam" and other Hindu residents of Wellawatte welcomed the Swami at the Wellawatte Railway Station and took him in procession to the assembly hall at Sammanakottar Marudayam where the Swami delivered a lecture on "The Ethics of the Kural" (in Tamil). On Sunday the 15th February the members of the Vivekananda Society celebrated Srimat Swami Vivekananda's birth day anniversary. Swami Vipulanandaji presided over the function and delivered a stirring address in Tamil on "Swami Vivekananda, the prophet of modern India." On the 16th the Swami visited the Colombo University College and addressed the members of the Tamil Association. On the 18th at the Cinapaya Theatre Hall, under the auspices of the Hindu Dharma Samaj, the Swami addressed a large audience in Tamil choosing for his subject "The Harmony of Religions." On Friday, the 20th under the auspices of the Ceylon Saiva Paripalana Sabha the Swami delivered a public lecture at the Tower Hall on "The Essence of Saivism." On the 22nd afternoon the Swami visited the prison at Welikade and gave spiritual advice to the Hindu prisoners there. In the evening the Swami addressed the students of the Union Hostel of the University College on "Education and the Perfection of manhood." On the 23rd the Swami visited the Ananda (Buddhist) College and delivered a lecture on "Buddhism in Tamil Literature." On the 24th evening the Swami performed the Tathi Puga. Sri Sri Samakrishna Mahamahisa Deva and on the following day delivered a public lecture in Tamil on the "Life and Teachings of the Master." On the 27th under the auspices of the Wellawatte Literary Association the Swami delivered a lecture on "The Permanence Basis for a Liberal Education;" on the 28th under the auspices of the Batticaloa Union the Swami delivered another public lecture at the Tower Hall on "Hindu and Indian Thought." On the 1st March the Swami addressed the Indian Young Men's Association on "The Practice of Religion," and left for Batticaloa where he spent four days. Returning to Colombo on the 6th he addressed the Hindu public and the members of the Vivekananda Society and Saiva Paripalana Sabha on matters relating to the welfare of the Hindus of Ceylon and left for Nawalapetia on the 8th. He spent nearly four days there and then went to Nandy. He is at present staying there, and hopes very soon to leave for Batticaloa where he is expected to make a month's stay.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

" Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

" Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ' I am the Atman.' "

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

I

IT was the afternoon of the twelfth day of April of the year 1885. Sri Ramakrishna was sitting surrounded by devotees in Balaram's parlour. M., Girish, Dwija and many others were present.

Girish was reading the life of Kesav Chandra Sen, written by one of his followers, Sj. Trailokya Sannyal. It contained a passage which said that Sri Ramakrishna had formerly a strong aversion for the house-holder's life ; but having come to know Kesav Chandra Sen, he had changed his opinion and begun to hold that one can realise God even in a life in the world. This was referred to the Master, and the devotees wished that when Trailokya who was expected would come to visit him, there would be a discussion with him on the point.

Seeing the book in Girish's hands the Master remarked that people made so much of the world for the very simple reason that they themselves were steeped in it,—in *Kamini Kanchana*. Had they realised the Lord, they would never have talked in that manner : before the joy of God-realisation the world seems a trash and a nothing. He said : " I at first cried fie on all worldly things. I gave up not only the company of the worldly-minded, but also that of the devotees

*Translated from the Diary of a disciple published originally in Bengali.

For a time. Some of them died, and my suffering was great. Now I can stand the company of some anyhow."

Girish went home, but would come again. In the meantime Trailokya and Jaygopal Sen came and having saluted the Master, took their seat. Chota Naren also arrived and prostrated before the Master. The Master asked him, "Why did you not go last Saturday?"

Sri R. — (To Trailokya) Ah, how sweetly you sang the other day of the Blissful Mother! What songs! Others' songs were insipid, even Narendra's I could not enjoy that day.

Presently Girish returned from home and was introduced by the Master to Trailokya. Sri Ramakrishna requested them to talk a little. After some time he asked Trailokya to sing again his song about Sri Gouranga. And as he sang of Sri Chaitanya, of how he would laugh and cry, sing and dance in the ecstatic love of God, the Master was overcome with feeling, and having stood up, lost all external consciousness. After a while when he returned to normal consciousness, he entreated the singer to sing another song about Sri Gouranga.

II

It was dusk when singing ended, and lamps were lighted in the parlour and the veranda. Sri Ramakrishna saluted the Divine Mother, and having repeated the mantram mentally for a few times, began to recite Her names in his divinely sweet voice. Girish, M. Balaram, Trailokya and other devotees were sitting before him, listening to the recitation. . . . After some time Girish as the spokesman of the devotees raised the point of discussion relating to that particular passage in the life of Kesav Chandra Sen. He said to Trailokya, "Sir, what you have stated about his change of opinion about life in the world is not true to facts."

Sri R. — (To Trailokya and others) If you once taste the joy of this side, you no longer find pleasure in the other: the joy of God once realised, the world seems insipid. If you get a shawl, you no more like common broadcloth.

*Trailokya:—*I have written of those who would be householders, not those that would renounce.

*Sri R. —*What strange ideas these! If they who talk so glibly of realising God in the world, once taste the joy

divine, they will lose all love for other things. Work will relax its hold on them ; and as the spiritual joy will deepen, they will lose all aptitude for work, and only go on seeking that joy. Can worldly and sexual pleasures compare with the joy of God ? If you once taste this divine bliss, you will run about seeking more and more, and you will care precious little for keeping up your household !

" They say they will look after both sides. Yes, when a man takes only two ounces of wine, he can do that. But can he, when he drinks very deep ? Having tasted the joy of God, man no longer finds joy in other things, and even the thought of *Kamini-Kanchana* is shocking to his mind. He runs mad for God, and finds no pleasure in money."

Trailokya :—But if one lives in the world, one must earn money. There are charities to be done.

Sri R :—What ! first earn money and then realise God ! And talk of charities ! They spend thousands in the marriage festivities of their daughters, but when a neighbour starves, they are loathe to give him a handful of rice, and if they give at all, they do it after a good deal of calculation ! People are dying of famine,—but what of that ? —let them live or die so long as they and theirs are safe ! And they prattle of doing good to the world !

Trailokya :—There are also good men in the world. Pundarika Vidyanidhi who was a devotee of Sri Chaitanya, was a householder.

Sri R :—He had drunk himself upto the throat. Had he drunk a little more, he could not have maintained family life.

Trailokya remained silent.

M. :—(*Aside to Girish*) Then what he has written is wrong.

Girish :—(*To Trailokya*) Then your statement is false ?

Trailokya :—Why, does he deny that God-realisation is possible in the house-holder's life ?

Sri R. :—No, I don't, but a man must live in the world after attaining Knowledge, after realising God. And then he will 'float on the sea of guilt, but no guilt will taint him.' He can live like a mud-fish. To live in the world after God-realisation is called an enlightened worldly life. There is

rooming of *Kamini-Kanchana* in it, there are only the Lord, His devotees and devotion. I also have my wife, and furniture and utensils in my room, and I feed the devotees and look after Habibi's house and others when they go there.

III

Devotee 2. (To Trailokya) I find from your book on Sri Chaitanya that you are not a believer in Divine Incarnation.

Trailokya :—Sri Chaitanya himself protested against this when Advaita and other devotees invoked him as a Divine Incarnation in a song at Puri. He closed his doors against them when he heard that song. Infinite are the glories of God, and as Sri Rameshshankar says, the devotee is like many Upariots. But however well-furnished the parlour may be, it does not exhaust His glories.

Girish. (To Sri Rameshshankar) says that Love is the essence of God. And we want the man through whom that love comes to us. He says that we want only the ladder of the cow through which the milk flows, not its limbs or horns.

Trailokya :—The milk of His love is flowing through infinite channels. Is He poor or impotent powers?

Girish :—But can any other power stand before the power of His love?

Trailokya :—Yes, it can. He who is the lord of that power wields so— all powers belong to Him.

Girish :—Yes, no doubt all other powers are also His, but they are *Lower Shaktis*, binding powers.

Trailokya :—Is there any such positive thing as *Avidya*? It is the negation of something else just as darkness is the negation of light. His love may be sufficient for us,—*His drop is an ocean*—but to say that love is the end of Him is to limit Him.

Sri R. :—Yes, yes, it may be so. But a little wine is enough to intoxicate us, what is the need of measuring the whole stock in the shop? What use is it for us to know of His infinite powers?

Girish :—(To Trailokya) Do you believe in Avatars?

Trailokya :—It is in His devotees that the Lord incarnates Himself. Infinite power cannot and does not have manifestation,—no, never in any man.

Girish :—You can look upon children as *Brahma Gopala*, why can you not worship saints as God ?

Sri R. :—(To *Trailokya*) Why do you drag in the Infinite ? If I have to touch you, am I to pass my hand over the whole of your body ? If I am to bathe in the Ganges, is it necessary that I should go over the whole length of the Ganges from Hardwar to the sea ? 'With the death of I ceases all trouble'. So long as the ego lives, there is the consciousness of difference. But what survives its destruction none can know or speak about. Then the Eternal exists in Itself, and you cannot say that one part of Him is manifest in this and another in that. Satchidananda is like unto the sea in which is immersed the vessel of 'ego' which so long as it exists divides the water into two sections, inside and outside. But when the vessel is broken they become *one* water. Nay, one cannot say even that, for *who* would say ?

When the discussion ended, the Master asked *Trailokya*, "Are you living in joy ?"

Trailokya :—No. As soon as I'll leave your presence, I'll become my old self again. Now I am feeling highly inspired.

Sri R. :—You need not fear brambles, if you have shoes on your feet. If you have the consciousness that God alone is real and this world is ephemeral, you need have no fear of *Kamini-Kanchana*.

Balaram invited *Trailokya* to another room to offer him some refreshments. It was nine o'clock. The Master began to describe the condition of people who were of *Trailokya*'s opinions. He said :

"Do you know what they are like ? Like a frog in the well, which, living ever within the well, and having never seen the world, would not believe that it really exists. They have not tasted the joy of God, hence it is that they talk so much of the world. (To *Girish*) Why do you wrangle with them ? They are holding on to both. One cannot understand what divine bliss is till one has tasted it. Can you make a child of five understand the pleasure of sex-intercourse ? It is all from hearsay what worldly people talk of God, just as children learn to swear in the name of God from the quarrels of their aunts.

But even the sages themselves in all recognition of the *Akhanda Brahman*. Only twelve *rishis* could know who Rama was, still cannot know. Some look upon them (the *Avataras*) as ordinary men, others as saints, and only a few know them as incarnations of God.

According to one's means, one offers prices for things. A rich man once told his servant, 'Take this diamond to the market, and tell me on your return what prices are offered for it and by whom. First go to the brinjal-seller.' The servant accordingly took the diamond to the purveyor of brinjals who carefully examined it and offered nine seers of his commodity in exchange. The servant higgled for one more; but the man said, 'I have already offered more than the market rate, you may or may not accept it.' The servant smilingly returned to his master and said, 'Sir, the brinjal-seller is not ready to offer a single fruit more than nine seers. He says that it has exceeded the market rate.' The master laughed to hear this, and said to the man, 'Now go to a draper. That man was but a purveyor of brinjals, how can his understanding be better?' The draper has a larger capital, let us see what he offers. The man went to the draper and asked him whether he would have the diamond, and what price he would offer. The draper replied, 'Yes, the stone is indeed beautiful and will make a fine ornament. I can give you nine hundred rupees.' Said the servant, 'Offer a little higher price and the diamond will be yours. Give me one thousand rupees.' 'No,' he replied, 'I have exceeded the usual rate already. I cannot give you a single rupee more.' The servant thereupon went back to his master and informed him how the draper could not give more than nine hundred rupees as even that was beyond the market rate. The master then laughingly asked him to go to the jeweller, which he accordingly did, and when the jeweller saw the diamond, he at once offered him a lakh of rupees.

"They talk of realising God in the world. It is like seeing a ray of light through a chink in the roof when the room is closely shut. Can you see the sun when there is a roof overhead? What is the use of a little light? *Kamini-Kanchana* is the roof. How can you see the Sun without removing the roof? The worldly people are as it were imprisoned within a closed room.

"The Avataras are *Iswarakotis*, they are roaming about in the open and are never entangled or imprisoned in the world. Their 'ego' is not the thick ego of the worldly which is like an enclosure of walls with a roof on the top, from inside which you catch no glimpse of the exterior. The ego of the Avataras is a very thin ego through which God is always visible. It is as if a man is standing by the side of a wall on both sides of which extend infinite fields. Now if there is a hole in the wall, the man can see through it everything on the other side ; and if the hole is wide enough he can go and return through it. The ego of the Divine Incarnations is like that wall with the hole, and though they are on this side of the wall, yet they see the unlimited expanse on the other side. That is to say, though they assume a body, yet they are ever in union with the Supreme, and whenever they wish they can go through the wide gap in the wall to the other side, they can plunge into Samadhi ; and because the gap is wide enough, they can return again, they can return from Samadhi to the normal plane. "

THE WITNESS OF REASON TO THE ADWALTA VLDANTA

G. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B. A., B. L.

REASON is an analysis of experience. When it contentents itself with being only that and nothing more, it often trips and falls. It must aim also at a proper re-synthesis of experience. Even then it is liable to err. It must seek often the aid of *śāstra* (scripture) so that it may avoid all possible error. But scripture should not be used to overawe or smother reason. Faith and reason should form a happy family.

I shall try to discuss and point out whether reason exercising its analytic and synthetic faculty leads us in its interpretation of experience. Right perception requires a trained and attentive mind working in conjunction with normal senses which are free from any defect or disease. Right inference depends on the possession of a trained logical faculty. The mind of man moves on in the performance of its self-imagined task of truth-finding with the aid of these two companions and guides created from within itself. If there would never be any finality of its methodical results, it can only proceed from hypothesis to hypothesis trusting to the logic of events to test the hypothesis and to show its accuracy or inaccuracy. Scripture alone can make affirmations as opposed to hypotheses.

Truth in the words of others is inherent in man. Distortion of speech words is the result of the fallibility or the fraud of the speaker. But when the speaker is infallible and free from fraud, his words are a source of right knowledge. Even in worldly matters faith in words is the source of all our knowledge, desire and activity. It is all the more important in supra-rational matters.

Even an ordinary exercise of our reasoning faculty makes us realise the disparity of Man and the Universe, the Subject and the Object. Idealism would deny the Universe, and materialism would deny the soul. If the universe has no independent existence but exists only in idea, there would be no pain at all because the perceiver would

never call up the sensation of pain at all. Further, unless the world has an independent existence it will not strike diverse perceivers in the same way. But on the other hand the perceiver cannot be a product of the objects perceived. Without the identity of spirit, memory would be impossible. If the mind were a mere bundle of sensations, how could a mere bundle be aware of itself as a unity? There is a unifying principle of consciousness in us. To ask if it exists is as ridiculous as if a speaker should ask if he has got a tongue or as if a mother should ask if she is a barren woman.

Thus neither idealism nor materialism satisfies us at all. Let us proceed with our task of rationalistic analysis. We see by experience as well as inference that the effect is only the cause in another form. Every manifestation is a limitation. When electricity takes the form of light or heat, the latter is a manifestation or an effect or a derivative of a more primary condition. In the same way if we take the whole universe, it is *Nama Rupa* (Names and Forms). The same Substance in its potential form of *Satchidananda* is called the Absolute or Brahman, and in its kinetic form of creative *Shakti* is called *Iswara*, and in its perceiving form is called *Jiva*, and in its perceived form is called *Jagat*. If in a golden ornament you concentrate your mind on the goldness the ornament-idea vanishes from the mind; and if we are absorbed in the form and details of the ornament, the gold-idea vanishes. But though the form may go, the gold will remain. The same inter-relation occurs in the case of clay and pot, cotton and cloth, etc. God's omnipresence implies that the world cannot be distinct from Him. If from *Jagat* aspect of God, name and form are eliminated, Brahman alone remains. If from the *Jiva* aspect the limiting mental *upadhi* is eliminated, Brahman alone remains. If from the God aspect the pure and perfect *Suddha Sattwa Maya* or *Prakriti* or *Shakti* is eliminated, Brahman alone remains. That is what Scripture affirms and reason confirms beyond all possibility of doubt.

The real freedom of man is in the extension of his personality. Heroism fascinates us because it is really an extension of personality so as to include that for which the hero willingly gives up his life. A real patriot feels

such an extension of his nature that the whole country becomes his body and hence any wound to it is felt as a wound to his own person. The lover has extended his personality which includes his beloved. Thus there is a bliss in the attainment of a larger self. When like Sri Suka, he identifies himself with the whole world not as a mere matter of verbal declaration but by a real extension of personality, perfect and divine bliss is the result, for that is the real God-nature and God is bliss.

The self-limitation of our true personality by our denial of its true nature as *Satchidananda* and by our regarding it as identical with our mind or our senses or the body or other persons or even objects is what is compendiously called by Sri Sankaracharya as *Adhyasa*. It is called also *ahamkara* and *mamakara*. Such *anadya-vidyavasana* as it is called cannot be overcome all at once by mere intellectual negation. Hence the best way to attain the removal of *ahamkara* and *mamakara* is to substitute the life of riotous desire by the life of regulated desire. He who clings to the seed with a fond sense of possession cannot have the next harvest and must soon die of starvation. All life is based on sacrifice. Sri Krishna says in the Gita : " Even this world does not belong to the man who has no sacrifice ; how then can he attain the heavenly world without it ? " The entire realm of scriptural ordinances is meant only to lead riotous desire through a state of regulated desire into desirelessness. The random rainfall has to flow through rivers, if it is to fertilise fields and eventually reach the ocean.

When Karma Yoga or Nishkama Karma is attained, the basement of self-realisation becomes complete. It is only on that basement that the palace of Raja Yoga, Bhakthi Yoga and Jnana Yoga can be erected. When that palace is erected, our soul, the eternal bride, will meet in union the Oversoul, the eternal bridegroom, and reign in bliss. Or to vary the figure, the banished king will come back into his own kingdom and attain *Swarajya* and be full of the royal bliss of *Satchidananda*.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

BE STEADFAST IN TRUTH

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

[*Written to a Western Disciple and hitherto unpublished*]

BE you holy and above all sincere and do not for a moment give up your trust in the Lord and you will see the light. Whatever is truth will remain forever ; whatever is not, none can preserve. We are helped in being born in a time when everything is quickly searched out. Whatever others think or do, lower not your own standard of purity, morality and love of God ; above all beware of all secret organisations. No one who loves God need fear any jugglery. Holiness is the highest and the divinest power in earth or in heaven. "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone is opened the way to God." Do not care for a moment who joins hands with you or not, be sure you touch the hand of the Lord. That is enough.....

I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow. I send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly life.....

Your dream was very, very beautiful. In dream our souls read a layer of mind which we do not read in our waking hours, and however unsubstantial imagination may be, it is behind the imagination that all unknown psychic truths lie. Take heart, we will try to do whatever we can for the good of humanity,—the rest depends upon the Lord.....

Well do not be anxious, do not be in hurry. Slow, persistent and silent work does everything. The Lord is great. We will succeed, my boy. We must. Blessed be His name.

Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one ! How would I like it and what an amount of good it would do to this country ! —*The Message of the East.*

TRAVAILS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE •

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA .

TO an average man religion has no interest. Why should he have, unless he feels any strong necessity for it. We move by necessity and not by any glittering idealism, put before our mind's eyes. To many, the world with its varied enchantments has got much greater attraction than any thought about the next world or after life. They are grossly occupied with the present and have not respite to think of any distant future. They will have to get on in the world—they will have to be one amongst men—they must see what life means—they must enjoy it in its different aspects, before any thought about what may happen after this life may come to them. It is very natural. Specially when one finds that there are many that follow this path, it is very difficult for him to leave the beaten track. Besides the world offers much enjoyment at the first sight—at least makes a great show of it, like things in a well-furnished shop—and one must act and test their value by one's own experience before the lingering charm in his mind will altogether vanish. Moreover, if you are once caught, it is very difficult to get rescued. You fall, as it were, in a trap, the more you pull, the more you get entangled. When a man falls into the clutches of a gambler, the intoxication of success as well as failure carries him on, though that may cost his whole property and leave him a street-begger before he comes to his senses.

Nor is a man to blame for that. Why?—he is moved by the immediate prospect!—he is moved by things which seem more certain and more real to him than any imaginary prospect which loomed large before the eyes of one in many and made him frenzied. Average man cannot conceive of any higher enjoyment than what the world offers. Afterwards the man finds the world has got its bitter side also—but he cannot help it—there is no other way, he must go on, because it is very difficult for him to stop. The world is full of sweets and bitters—nevertheless it has got something pleasant in it—that is his consolation—and still as man drinks on and on from the cup of life, he finds that the bitter things have outweighed the sweeter ones—he cries in gnawing anguish, he is deceived—he has been allured. So there are very few men, who can face

death with a free heart, unless the animal nature has shrouded them altogether.

But there is another kind of men, who at a glance see the whole scene—this round of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain—both of which appear meaningless and childish to them and they are afraid to put their hands into the wheel. It is a mistake to think that we grow wise by age—our wisdom grows by experiences we gather and that is also dependent on our ability to gather lessons from them. So we find some people, even from their very infancy—it may be due to their experiences in past life—revolt at the very idea that they will remain satisfied with the world and its tinsel show, they find it hard to believe that any sensible man can make himself a slave to the world and not try to find out the reality behind it—its meaning and purpose that underlie. Even the child becomes so precocious that the whole history of the past appears before him as clear as daylight, he wonders, why the humanity is not wiser by the lesson that it offers. The world has got no attraction for him—he finds it a great void for him and there is a great void in his heart, which he runs hither and thither, in a wild frenzy, to fill up. The greatest pity is—which pains him most is, he finds himself out of tune with the whole humanity. He has to rise against all odds—his best friends and nearest relations do not—cannot sympathise with him; they do not understand, what a great fire is burning him day and night.

Here begins the real search after religion. Here religion is a necessity with a man—a greater necessity than his very life—because the chief attraction which binds and has bound the whole mankind is gone for him. Life always rests on some purpose—and the man gets mad to find out his own purpose in life. In such a condition of mind, a man finds a big wall of darkness behind him—and a more impenetrable darkness in front—he finds a blazing line of wild fire at his back, which he dares not approach, but he does not find a place also, whereto he can jump for his safety. In such a position, a man stands and suffers for a long time, before his religious life begins to build.

But still this does not proceed from a fear of the world, as a man will like to put it—this is not from a morbid condition of the mind, —may be an unusual impetuosity has got the better of the calmness in him—because the man is otherwise all right—he is very strong in many respects—there is not the

least trace of fear in him, which abounds in the bravest amongst men—the only difficulty with him is, his whole being gives way, when he is forced to follow the routine life of the world. He is not inferior to any, but in the world he is always left behind. It is not idleness—it is not inertia ; for how can he put forth his energy for a cause, which has lost all interest for him. He suffers, he bears the scorn, he knows, because he is out of his elements. He can no longer live in that half dream—half-sleep, which a man calls life. The night has broken for him—but still the dawn has not yet come : he lives in the twilight, so he cannot sufficiently express himself—he cannot convince others that he is not wrong, though the whole world may be right.

This is simply but the beginning of the whole thing. The man who, in the foolish ignorance of the whole prides himself on such occasions, is sure to be disappointed pretty soon. Religious life is never built up by waving a magic wand on any fine auspicious morning—however fortunate the man may be, it is always a slow process. We are to cement every brick,—each one of that, with tears from our eyes, or blood from our heart. By our eager thirst we may burn “ the thorns on the ground ” or drive the “ fowls in the air ” for a time, for the mustard seed to grow—still it will not be so easy for the seed to grow into a big tree and bear fruit : it will require much tender care—and timely hedging of the plant and many protections to save the plant from intrusion. The man who does know nothing of the music may well laugh at the movements, which a musician performs, in his inability to contain himself, when his whole being is in tune with melody—as foolish and ludicrous, but another man, who has made the least attempt at the perfection, at which the master has arrived, can gauge well, how far he is away, and how many difficulties are on the path. A man without any inkling of true religious life may well pity a man with religious fervour, as seeking a life of comparative ease, but the struggling soul only knows what a price he is paying for that.

Religious life is just the opposite of one with comfort and ease as a man outside the pale may think. There is ample room and scope for taking shelter under a show of it—manifested or unmanifested—but if one wants to keep on, one shall have to carry a blasted life for a long time before he realises the goal. “ Who can hug the form of death and dance in

destruction's dance, to him alone Mother comes." That is the secret of the worship of Goddess Kali—the emblem of terror. Why should we always, like a beggar, seek pleasure at the hands of God and ignore its reverse. Pain is the opposite of pleasure, sorrow is the opposite of joy, despair is another name of hope—failure is the other side of success. Why should we be seized with terror at the name of one and get elated like a foolish child at the thought of the other. Both come from the Mother. The undaunted child, who welcomes both, as blessings from Mother, can alone get Her favour.

Oh the joy of a life devoted to God, says the man accustomed to rest in imagination. Joy certainly there is—but not in the sense he means. The gossamer fabrics, and the halo of romance which we build round an imaginative life give way at the first cold touch of reality. We cannot live long in a dream, though the whole life is a dream. When we enter seriously into religious life, the things which looked like sparkling dew in morning light, very easily dries up; we are to work our way through a long African desert under the scorching midday sun. There is no other help. That is the test. The worst of it is that some time things, on which we pin our whole life are given rude shake, from time to time, just to try their strength, as it were. The very principles, on which we start our life, seem to betray us. Our thoughts, like Proteus take not only various shapes, but are tinged in manifold hues also like cameleon.—The chafing mind swings not like a pendulum at regular intervals, but in a most capricious way, with the wildest speed and we do not know, where we stand. Very often we feel like a tiny boat at the crest of furious waves, at any moment likely to upset, if not for a thin line of faith in some invisible power, which is also lost sight of, from time to time. Trying to go forward one single step, with all our might, we are pushed back a hundred steps, it seems. Then there come the stormy nights with all their horrors and gushing cyclones, we seem to miss the very faint and last ray of hope, which sustains us. All the powers of evil are at war against all the powers of good. If we find it takes a life's energy to mend our one single angularity, as we proceed, we find hundreds of them unfurling their ghastly hoods all at the same time. Many things, which we were wholly unconscious of, come on the surface, and take away our breath, as soon as we try to stifle them. Unfortunately for humanity, Mara,

who raised horrible spectres before the Saviour of humanity or Satan who tempted the Son of God are not altogether dead, but are ever on the alert, to seize a single soul, with all their vehement wiles, whenever it tries to escape their clutches.

Amidst all these come allurements, physical, mental and spiritual. We feel tired and tempted to take shelter under them. But that will stop all progress. Sometimes they take such subtle form that it is very difficult to find them out and more difficult to weed them off.

In the intensity of our struggle, we hear the faint, feeble, distant voice—"seek and ye shall find—ask and it shall be given"—we ask ourselves—is it true?—is it to be trusted?—why our experiences cannot be denied—our sufferings at least are not false!—are we not seeking with all our might? We may have, throughout, the poetic complacency, that we are the children of God or the intellectual satisfaction on hair-splitting discussion that all is Brahman and world is maya, but how many times are we to struggle against the feeling that we are, after all, far away from God and try to stay over the saying—"It is after many births that the wise will get Me"—Are you ready to wait?

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

GLEANINGS AND COMMENTS

WHAT IS GENIUS ?

IN the latest issue of *Psyche*, Genevieve Ambrose enquiring into the nature of Genius, considers the opinions held by different European thinkers. Lombroso holds that 'insanity is the essential characteristic of genius.' Havelock Ellis points out prevalence of gout among most of the hundred and thirty-five British men and women whom he considers in his *A Study of British Genius*. Aristotle also believed that there was 'no great genius without some mixture of insanity.' Other ancient definitions speak of genius as 'a spark of the divine,' 'a gift of the gods,' 'a divine elixir coming to man from above and directing his actions.' Thomas Carlyle considers genius as a select race, the chosen of the world. He defines the phenomenon as an infinite or transcendent capacity for taking pains. A more scientific analysis by Hartman in his *Philosophy of the Unconscious* characterises the moments of genius as 'a divine frenzy, a vivifying breath of the unconscious, appearing to consciousness as a higher inexplicable suggestion which it is forced to apprehend as fact without ever being able to unravel its laws.' Schopenhauer analyses the mind as a double intellect in which the unconscious is liberated from the dominion of the conscious will. 'The mind of the genius,' he says, 'is like a carbuncle among stones: it sends forth light of its own, while others reflect only that which they receive.' He accounts for the peculiarities of genius by reason of its great originality and its forcibly expressed individuality. And the difference between genius and the ordinary mind he finds to be quantitative in so far as it is a difference of degree but also qualitative in view of the fact that ordinary minds, notwithstanding variation, tend to think alike. 'Genius is driven to express itself by instinct,' he says, 'as though its possessor felt the necessity of preserving his vision for the whole species.' Halleck says that genius has highly developed sense organs, and makes use of all these in receiving its impressions. The writer infers that the most correct view of genius is perhaps the one, advanced by Schopenhauer, 'liberation of the unconscious from the dominion

of the conscious mind.' To this the writer adds two other necessary characteristics,—highly sensitive sense organs and retentive memory.

DR. TAGORE ON NATIONALISM

In the course of his recent visit to Italy Dr. Rabindranath Tagore had a long conversation in Milan with an Italian student, who desired to know from him what his ideas are in regard to nationalism. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore said, as reported in *The Manchester Guardian* :—

"You may ask me to explain to you what are my ideas about the nation. Most people think that Nationalism is that principle of unity which binds together the people who acknowledge it. And yet you do not call the Jews a nation who have a stronger bond of unity among themselves than most other peoples, a bond that has not yet been dissolved under the stress of centuries of homelessness and persecution. The individual members of this community may even belong to two enemy nations fighting against each other and yet socially and culturally they still belong to the same original brotherhood.

The same thing holds good with regard to the Hindus, who are considered to be a community but not a nation, though a very strong and conservative spirit of fundamental unity has been keeping them together for ages against all the political vicissitudes that have passed over them. Therefore I divide the collective aspect of the different human races into two categories—the people and the nation.

I regard the difference between people and nation as the same as that between the natural and the professional man—that is, between man the father, the husband, the friend, and man the physician, the lawyer, the soldier, or the man of business. We often find real and fundamental differences between these two aspects in the same individual between the natural and the professional. The one can be kind and hospitable, and so forth ; the other grasping, deceitful, and cruel. So when I judge a people I judge them, not only from that completely human aspect, for as people they may have their love of humanity and of nature, but also as a nation, for in their national aspect they can be selfish and cruel.

The man who is generally willing to help others at once becomes a different being when he puts on his professional personality. I find that this professional aspect in people has become predominant in the West, and their humanity has become subordinate. It is this professional aspect which is the national aspect. The people are naturally creative, from them come art, religion, poetry and song but in their professional capacity only the machinery and the organisation for producing things. They are constructive, mechanical, they must have their fees, they can cease to be living, and because they are mechanical the artificial side of their nature tends to assert itself and they can gradually lose the deeper love of humanity, of justice, and of truth. As their wealth increases their power increases.

It is very difficult for an idealist to prove in the terms of these professional men and by using their arguments that spiritual truth is **really** higher. I cannot say "You are losing your power and wealth in this way, by being merely professional." They answer, "What are you? Merely beggars, whilst we are powerful. The truth that you preach has done us no good." So I can't prove to them that through the cultivation of the nation they have come to something evil.

We have an ancient saying "Through unrighteousness they prosper, they find benefits, they conquer their enemies, but they perish at the root." So from an external aspect they prosper temporarily, but their prosperity is not permanent. After centuries of power and prosperity you, in Europe, have come to this point, and you do not know what to do. You see no prospect of peace. Class is arrayed against class, man against woman because you have lost your faith in the foundations, in all that is great in the human world, and you have been piling up power into a triumphal column which your foundations cannot support. Science has given you power, but not the foundations, which might give you happiness, so that the soul of the people is smothered by the nation.

Your people produced great works of art and poetry when there was no political greatness in them. You had a soul which expressed itself in immortal works of art and literature. You may have become politically great, but what voice have you to-day? The Germans were not politically great when they produced their chief works of art and their greatest men. They have great scientists now, but no man of vision, no great creative artist. The soul of their people is smothered, and ambition like a dark demon is brooding over their living mind until the voice of the soul is silenced. Mazzini was not a politician. He was a great man of ideas, a real soul, what in India we call a Mahatma, and therefore he rescued your politics from all kinds of meanness. But compared to the politicians who followed him, he was a more complete specimen of humanity.

How difficult it was for President Wilson, for instance, to introduce a moral element into politics. How tragically he failed. He wished to build a league of nations, not a league of peoples, and therefore he had to sacrifice his ideals and exercise diplomacy. In the end he failed to do either. Failure for the politician is ultimate, it is an ultimate loss. But failure for the idealist is never loss. It may be the only true gate to true success, and this has been proved by the lives of all our greatest men.

Is the nation then an unmitigated evil? Has it not some **useful** purpose?

Of course professional help is needful. If your house is menaced you must guard over it and you must employ watch-men who will fight the robbers. When you see men prowling round your house you naturally think they have come to rob and you become suspicious. But is this the normal state of mind? It is only when you lack faith in your neighbours that you turn into professional watchmen and cease to behave like an ordinary householder who opens his door and calls his neighbour in to share with him.

Western civilisation may have created circumstances which have urged you to cultivate the spirit of professionalism. Once one nation becomes strong and gives itself over to the cultivating of muscle, of army and navy, and to the game of high finance, you also are compelled to cultivate that because of this unhealthy, unnatural condition. This course may be necessary, yet it ought to be condemned.

Collective egoism is that feeling of the nation which must never be encouraged. It has the same result as with the individual. If you keep on exaggerating your self-importance you lose your balance. Germany, in cultivating this megalomania, lost her balance ; British has been cultivating it, America now has her own huge idea of greatness. It is this spirit of highness which leads you to be always lengthening your dreadnoughts, to multiply your army, your soldiers, your wealth, your possessions. You have generated a condition of affairs which has compelled you to become professional in your growth and in your expression of life. You are accurate, you are scientific, you are professionally efficient when you wish to strike a blow or to resist. This I admit, but where is your soul, where is the Infinite, the Divine showing itself in man, as in the past ? Where is your great man ?

I have admitted that you have this great truth of science in the West and I acknowledge the greatness of your discovery, but there is a responsibility towards truth which you are bound to acknowledge before you can become great. Can you use science solely for the sake of humanity ? You have no business to use truth for any other purpose, and if you once insult truth it comes back to you to hurt you. You could in the West have become great if, with the help of science, you had taken your stand beside humanity, and all humanity would have hailed you. But you have used it for the purpose of killing, as the Spanish made use of gunpowder to obliterate completely that wonderful civilisation of the Incas in Peru. Is gunpowder such a great thing ? Was not the spirit of that great people of more value, and do you realise what was lost ?

In the modern world men do not see the spark of truth that is hidden behind all the latest developments of our age, because in the beginning it is shut up, just as you do not see the whole forest just in a single seed, although the spirit of the forest is all the time at work in the seed. So with the nation, and the idea of the nation, there is within it that kernel of truth which shows itself in willing sacrifice for a cause. This truth will win in the end. It will come out and blossom, but at the moment I must denounce the egoism and cruelty of this professional, the nation."

WHY BRAINS GROW SMALLER

Those who will inherit the earth will not be people predominantly intellectual, but people of robust constitution with a good deal of what is called the animal in them, suggested Sir Arthur Keith, the anthropologist in an interview with the *Westminster Gazette*.

In the first of two lectures which he delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons, Sir Arthur asserted that the brain of primitive man was

bigger than that of man to-day and that the part of the brain which carries out intellectual operations is only a small part of the whole brain.

He was asked to enlarge on this.

A preponderance of intellect, he considers, reduces its possessor's happiness, making him too keenly conscious of man's frailty and weakness.

Reviewing the past and present of man's brain, he scouted the vision novelists and others have conjured up of the advent one day of a superman who would be all intellect.

"Whatever may happen in the future," he said. "I think we may take it as certain that man will never develop into a huge-brained fellow, living only on pellets of energy and pre-occupied only with abstruse mathematical and other problems.

"Man's brain through the ages has been getting gradually smaller.

"I illustrate my basis for saying this by drawing a parallel between primitive man and a villager who wakes up one morning and finds the countryside covered deep with snow. Wishing to walk to the next village, he has great difficulty in finding his way over the strangely altered landscape. But since he has arrived, he was made the way easy for the next traveller. Each traveller makes it successively more easy for the next.

"So primitive man with no footmarks to guide him, he had to pioneer, and nature gave him a big brain for the solving of the great initial problems whereby he should have dominion over all the world.

"The result is that we have grown up upon the accumulated knowledge of our forefathers. There are fewer fresh problems for the brain to tackle and the brain has consequently dwindled in size according to its needs.

"That part of the brain which deals with intellectual operations forms only a small portion of the whole brain. The brain has a great number of departments, and the sensory departments are a bigger part than the rest.

"When Nature schemed to raise man above the beasts, she had some idea of the dangers of intellect. There is a profound truth in many of the lessons of the old Eastern philosophers and the Old Testament story of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is not the least of them.

"Nature saw that if man's brain were to be all intellect he would become profoundly miserable. If the animal in us were entirely subjugated and Reason became supreme, the human race would soon cease to exist. May be we should all commit suicide. The fear of death and the love of life are two of the bases of animal life. Reason would probably soon come to regard both as fallacies and decide that all life was but a painful beating of butterfly wings against inexorable bars.

"So Nature, that man might always be happy left him still largely an animal. Broadly speaking, it is only through the animal in us

that we get pleasure in life. Nature left us sex attraction ; she left us the senses to find pleasure in beauty, in music, in art : she left us the instinct for physical endeavour by means of fighting, hunting, sport, and of overcoming physical obstacle. And she made the intellect capable of enhancing those delights.

" If Keats, when he wrote that Beauty was Truth and Truth Beauty meant to imply that intellect was not truth, then he was right. Think how horribly dull the world would be if we were all John Stuart Mills !

" Our intellect has given us the means of getting a little nearer to the angels, and of finding a higher form of delight in the sensory pleasures. But it has also made us more conscious of pain, weakness, and evil.

" I am quite certain that we feel pain twenty times acutely than a dog. The dog's brain is a reflex type of brain.

" When we were given the capacity to reason, we lost much of our animal power of intuition. But one still finds forms of intuition highly developed in people, notably in women.

" I mean it in no derogatory sense when I say that women have been left a larger share of intuition than men because they have a smaller intellectual capacity.

" I don't suppose we shall ever see a woman with the brain of a colossus.

" The purely rational woman would never be able to exist for long, any more than the purely rational man. One must not be misled by passing phrases.

" Yet although Nature restricted the capacity of our intellect, she gave us, like a sound engineer, a big margin of safety just as she has done with the heart and the lungs. We have about ten times more power of brain and intellect than we are ever likely to need.

" Most people go about using only a very small portion of their brains. They are like people living in a big house and occupying only the basement.

" Only once in a blue moon do you find an instance of a man using the full capacity of his brain. And, in fact the bulk of us don't need to use all our brain-power. Mankind requires only a certain portion of thinkers. If we all had big brains, and used them, everybody would be scrapping everybody else for leadership."

SRI SADASIVENDRA SARASWATI

SWAMI GHANANANDA

KARUR is a small railway town midway between Erode and Trichy in Trichinopoly District. Eight miles east of Karur, there stands a village called Nerur, with two rows of Brahman houses. A visitor to this village will be impressed with its rural quietness and beauty, its green fields and running waters. On the quietest and holiest spot in its vicinity can be seen a small temple dedicated to Siva, with a flower-garden containing several fine *arali*, *tulasi* and other plants, untrimmed and unpruned by any hand and allowed to grow in their natural luxuriance, the tallest denizen of this garden being a big old *Vilva* tree. This temple was built in memory of one of the greatest of South Indian saints and sages—Sri Sadasivendra Saraswati—a remarkable Raja Yogi of the highest God-realisation, whose relics are humbly treasured by a mound of earth below the tree.

Sadasiva was born of Brahman parents in the beginning of the eighteenth century, probably in or near Thiruvichanellore, a village on the banks of the holy Cauvery, “bosomed high in tufted trees” like the tall and large palms and mangoe interspersed with the green banana.

Sadasiva was a brilliant scholar. The beauties of nature amidst which he grew quickened his natural sensibilities. The cultured and scholarly teachers under whom he studied enabled him to make rapid and remarkable advance in his Sanskrit learning, in the study of Vedanta, the Upanishads, logic and other subjects taught in his days. Some of his class-fellows like Ramabhadra Dikshidar, Sri Venkatesa, and Gopalakrishna Sastri who themselves were famous dramatists, poets and Vedantins, have borne testimony to his worth, the depth of his scholarship, and the brilliance of his genius. He indelibly impressed them all with the rare qualities of his head and heart. Sadasiva later produced some precious works which are very helpful and inspiring to students of Prasthanatraya (the three bases of Hinduism, viz., the Upanishads, the Brahma-sutras and the Gita), of Hindu Yoga and philosophy. Some of them are *Introduction to the twelve Upanishads*, *Yogasudhakara* (a Commentary on the Sutras of Patanjali),

Ātmavidyāvilāsa, *Siddhāntakālpavallī* and *Ādwaitarasa-manjarī*.

In accordance with the Hindu custom, Śaḍasiva was married or rather betrothed, when quite young.

Śaḍasiva left school when he was about to enter the threshold of manhood, and returned to his parents.

Delicately sensitive are the world's greatest souls. A stray blade of grass, a passing wind, and "the meanest flower that blows" reveal to them a whole world of meaning and wisdom and "fill them with tears too deep for humanity." They are endowed with the power

"To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour."

When Buddha's heart was touched by grief at the sight of a bird struck by an arrow in his pleasure-garden, he was ruminating over the grief of the whole world and eventually made it his own. When the boy Śankara learnt the truths of the Scriptures, his curiosity to practise them in his life was roused and he became the great teacher of humanity. How few of us, alas, can feel the dulcet charms of melody divine in the midst of the throng, the din and noise of life and listen with rapture to the music of the Æolian Harp described by the poet :

"And now its strings

Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy Land,
Where melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untam'd wing !
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere—
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so fill'd ;
Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
Is music slumbering on her instrument."

Before Sadasiva's return, his bride had attained age. His mother was therefore celebrating the event in her own house in the bride's honour. As the festivity involved more than usual labour and as his mother had many duties to perform on that day, he could not be given his meal in time. This delay put him in mind of the delay in the life of man in doing things of greater moment, in acquiring knowledge and wisdom, in striving to live a life "worthy in the great Task-master's eye." Thought he within himself : " If I get my meal late on account of the festivities in honour of my wife, how can I expect comfort and convenience in my life as a householder. They say such a life is a great obstacle to concentration on God and to spirituality. "

The thought is father to the deed. Sadasiva left his home, his dear mother and his girl-wife. He left them all in quest of God.

He spent his time in pious and holy thoughts. He felt the need for a spiritual guide (*Guru*). Ere long, however, he fell in with a man of divine realisation called Paramasivendra Saraswati. He received his initiation into the spiritual life from him. The guru and the disciple loved each other dearly. The teacher bade Sadasiva stay with him and taught him all his methods of *Sadhana* or spiritual practices. Sadasiva made great advance therein under his personal guidance and supervision.

Well-read in the Sastras and endowed with a quick intelligence and memory as he was, Sadasiva proved an invincible debater. Several men of learning were wont to visit his *guru*. He used to cross swords with them in logic and Vedanta and other subjects. Being highly versatile and brilliant, he would bear away the palm. This was, however, a recurring source of discomfiture to the defeated antagonists. In their wounded pride and egoism, one day, they complained to the *guru* about Sadasiva. Such querulous words had more than once reached his ears. This time, the *guru*, however, could not put up with Sadasiva. In a tone of impatience mixed with anger, he said, looking at his disciple : " Sadasiva ! When are you going to hold your tongue from vain talk ? "

This was a strong homethrust to Sadasiva. He made up his mind never more to open his mouth to speak. He would only live the spiritual life. He would live in constant commune with God. He took the vow of life-long silence,

received his *guru's* blessings for the fruition of his spiritual efforts, and left the *guru's* place, "with the broad expanse of blue above for his roof and wide earth below for his bed."

From the first day of his vow, Sadasiva was living a life of deep and strenuous *Sadhana* (religious practices) far away in forest coves on the banks of the beautiful Amaravati and the sacred Cauvery. His whole life was an almost uninterrupted process of God-absorption.

Often Sadasiva would not rise from his state of God-union for several months together. Once he was deeply meditating on a sandheap in a dry part of the Cauvery river-bed, by the town of Kodumudi. Soon he lost all body-consciousness and "knew neither this world nor any other." Days passed by, and the river was in high floods. Large trees uprooted and huge logs of wood from the banks were being rolled down the lusty impetuous current which burst asunder the heap of sand on which Sadasiva was sitting rapt in meditation. Those who saw this tried to save him, but their efforts were in vain. He was taken to have perished helplessly in the floods.

Three months later, when the floods had completely subsided, and the river-bed became dry again, and some of the inhabitants of Kodumudi, who had gone to the river for bath were digging for water in the dry sand, one of them saw his spade besmeared with fresh blood. They were at a loss to know what it could mean. They dugged more but with caution and discovered the body of a man in meditation posture. He rose and looked around, the people beheld him with awe and wonder, and he left the place for another. It was Sadasiva.

Great mental and physical powers come to the Yogi who is a past master in concentration. Patanjali, the famous author of the Yoga Sutras, bears testimony to this fact and also explains psychologically how they can be attained. They are not necessarily signs of God-realisation but are attained in the striving at perfection by the Yogi who, however, paying no heed to them, marches onward with singular strength of mind to his goal of divinity.

Sadasiva is said to have possessed such powers. On the day on which the annual festival in the Sundareswara

Temple in Madura was celebrated, when he was playing with some boys of whom he was very fond and to whom he would distribute now and then some sweets offered to him by some devotees, they all beseeched him to take them to Madura and enable them to worship in the temple. At this, Sadasiva bade them mount on his shoulders and close their eyes. The next moment they opened their eyes and to their surprise found themselves within the temple of Sundareswara decorated with beautiful flowers of various hues, perfumed with rich frankincense and crowded by a host of devotees jostling each other to have a look at the deity within. The boys worshipped Sundareswara and received *prasad* from Sadasiva's own hands. In the morning Sadasiva is said to have mysteriously taken them back and left them in their homes where they told their mothers what happened and gave them what was left over of the *prasad*. This might have happened as Raja Yogis possess extraordinary powers of movement from place to place as testified by Patanjali who says :—

“ By making *samyama* on the objectivity and power of illumination of the organs, on egoism, the inherence of the *gunas* in them, and on their contributing to the experience of the soul, comes the conquest of the organs.” “ From that comes to the body the power of rapid movement like the mind, and power of the organs independently of the body, and conquest of nature.”

Sadasiva used to wander like the cast-off leaf which is blown about hither and thither by the passing wind. Often he would so entirely lose his body-consciousness that he would roam about stark-naked. Once, in such a state of mind, he happened to pass by the harem of the palace of a Nawab, who came of a royal family. In his anger at seeing an unknown man nude near the apartment of his wives whom even the rays of the sun would not dare to approach, the Nawab cut off one of his hands. Feeling in no way perturbed by this act, Sadasiva was moving on as if nothing had happened. Struck with awe and surprise at this indifference of the stranger, the Nawab followed him from place to place, watched him day and night, and served him out of reverence. Sadasiva asked him why he was pursuing him like a shadow, to which he replied : “Holy sire, I am overcome with grief at my having thoughtlessly severed your hand. What shall I do to assuage your pain ?” Sadasiva came to know of the

injury of his hand only at that time. Passing his other hand over where the mutilated one was, he became healed and a new hand sprang in the place of the old. He used to pass many days and months in such deep absorptions as made him completely forget his body and as effaced the whole world from his mind.

Wonderful was the passing away of Sadasiva. He went to the village of Nerur, called together the Brahmans of the place, and spoke to them as follows : " On the *Sukla Dasami* day in the month of *Jyaistha* (*Ani*), I will, as usual commune with God, give up this body and be united with Him for ever. A Brahmana will arrive from Benares at that time carrying a *Sivalinga*. A few cubits from where I shall sit in meditation and renounce this 'muddy vesture of decay', erect a temple and instal the *Sivalinga* therein." The village-folk accordingly dug a trench and were awaiting the final hour. Sadasiva took his seat inside the pit and just then they saw a Brahmana, who, they learnt on enquiry, was coming from Benares bearing a *Sivalinga*. Sadasiva's words were fulfilled. His mind rose fervently in quiet but deep prayer leaving the body behind. The temple that the villagers erected at his bidding stands even to this day. The spot purified by his relics breathes a holy atmosphere and is one of the most sacred and inspiring places of pilgrimage. Many devotees and sannyasins visit it seeking "the peace that passeth the understanding." Arrangements have been made by the Royal House of Pudukottah for the observance of daily Puja, annual celebrations and other functions in the temple which are done even to-day.

SWAMI GHANANANDA



NOTES OF THE MONTH

Heroes and Heroism

HEROIC ELEMENT IN MAN

Man is bound to act by his nature. An invisible power is propelling him to work even during his slumber: his lungs breathe, his heart moves. Inexorable is the law of nature: inevitable its working. It is a vivid spectacle of ceaseless activity of the animate nature and constant movement of the inanimate that is presented to our eyes by the macrocosm and the microcosm constituting the entire cosmos. Astronomy tells us of the movement of the stars, the planets and other heavenly bodies, each moving in space according to a definite and fixed law. Biology tells us of the unceasing struggle of animals in the midst of "Nature red in tooth and claw," each trying to defeat or elbow out the rest, and striving at all costs to preserve and propagate its species. The science of the human mind also tells us that man is endowed with the active principle and therefore bound to work in the world. Why not he act with courage and wisdom, when he has to act? Hero is he who thinks boldly and acts heroically; he rises and wins the game of life. Coward is he who timidly watching and waiting fails to strike a blow on his anvil when needed; he fails and loses the game.

NOTES OF HEROISM IN THE SYMPHONY OF LIFE

The individual soul is in a continuous state of progressive evolution. The numberless links in the chain of Self-unfoldment from the smallest amoeba to the full-grown animal, from the fish and frog, to the bird and reptile, to the ape and man, reveal to us the long long story of the development of the physical side of living beings. But evolution is not simply physical, not merely one of form; it is also concerned with mind or intelligence. The instinct which we observe in animals and which finds its best expression in ants, bees and wasps, does not die with them. How can instinct be an entirely different and isolated faculty from reason? When it knocks at the door of expansion in the palace of Nature, instinct evolves into reason. And when reason thirsts to acquire the knowledge of the divine it evolves into intuition, the faculty which is the great distinguishing characteristic of saints and seers. In correspondence to these, there are also three planes of evolution or existence, viz., the physical, mental, and spiritual, and three types of heroism or expressions of the will in action which are nothing but the efforts at self-expression put

forth by the human being in contending with his surroundings, with nature both internal and external, to reach his ultimate goal of perfection.

One man may be inspired with what is called physical courage and act heroically. The heroism of another may be the manifestation of intellectual courage. And the heroism of a third person may be the outcome of spiritual courage. This last is the best and finest fruit of all that is noble and great and grand and pure in life, the result of living a life in the Self or Spirit in tune with the Infinite. The heroism of the "bull-dog type" does not connote a high level of evolution. Heroism with presence of mind and coolness in danger is certainly of a higher order. And superior to both these is the rare heroism of the intellect, the heroism of a Galilee or a Socrates who would fain suffer behind prison bars for the sake of truth of which they had the strongest conviction. Last but not least comes the heroism of the spirit which is that of the man whose eyes can stand the severe and dazzling light of Reality and who can live and act and move undaunted to the greatest of life's aims in spite of obstacles or obloquy.

What is true of man is true also of the society or nation of which he is but a unit, and of the civilisation in general which is the outcome of the best thoughts and the best deeds of himself and his fellow-men. In the history of the dawn of western civilisation, the Greeks with their love of external nature, of war and of prowess, held up before themselves the ideal of physical perfection, the ideal of the strongest man with the finest and best developed physique, and prided themselves in the deeds of valour they wrought and in the cultivation of the art they loved. The Spartans with their immortal Leonidas in their midst shine out as perfect models of physical courage and heroism and as monuments of physical strength. With the Romans, the ideal of heroism was manifested more in the elaboration of law and the consummation of order and in the development of talents for administration. It was more inward than in the Greeks and the change is quite compatible with chronological sequence. In the history of a nation like the Hindus, physical heroism was admired and developed to a highly remarkable degree by the Rajputs and the Mahrattas, by their princes and princesses and warrior-chiefs. The great original discoveries in the field of medicine, astronomy, the science of numbers and other branches of knowledge also bear eloquent testimony to the intellectual boldness in the land which reached its acme in its philosophy which remains to this day the best and the grandest the world has ever produced. But with these India did not content herself. She looked

ever forward and had a brighter vision than other nations. She peeped, as it were, from out of the window of this universe into the universe beyond ; she discovered the Truth of Life, the Life Hereafter. She moved in the Domain of the Spirit, and bringing a spark of the ever-burning Immortal Fire like Prometheus from the other world, taught her children how to shed the lustre of its light on their life and deeds.

RINGING VOICE OF HEROES

Who amongst those that have a sense of the heroic can fail to listen to the ringing voice of the heroes of the past, who have laboured nobly and well in life in the pursuit of action and adventure, knowledge, and truth, and goodness and virtue ? Bereft only of the vesture of their body, they are alive even to-day. Who amongst the brave can remain deaf to the clarion call of strong and faithful devotion to duty that rises from Casabianca, the boy of thirteen who stood on the burning deck of the French vessel in obedience to the command of its admiral his father, or from the young Danish boy who defying cold, hunger and fatigue stood forty hours and eight, with his finger pressed against the unrepaired hole of the Danish dyke ? Literature, art, politics, science, religion—all these are replete with countless illuminating examples of valiant and heroic deeds done by men, young and old, who nobly lived. The world can never forget its Dante, Shakespeare and Kalidasa. It can never forget its Wagner and Angelo, its Raphael and the workmen who wrought poetry and captured beauty alive in the Taj Mahal. It will ever remember its Julius Caesar, Alexander and Napoleon, its Sivaji and Ranjit Singh. It will ever remember its Newton and Edison, its Bose and Ray. And above all, it will always cherish with reverence and devotion the holy names of Zoroaster and Confucius, Buddha and Christ, Rama, Krishna and Ramakrishna.

PSYCHOLOGY OF HEROISM

Man has always entertained a burning love for heroes, and a consuming passion for heroism, because they rise above the normal and the ordinary, and exercise an elevating effect on his mind. By a preparation for an act of boldness and courage to throw himself into the thickest of the fight of life, his whole personality is fed and nourished, his consciousness vivified and intensified, and his mind enabled to reach the ultimate limits of its strength and fervour, and he becomes capable of realising for himself the very source of all strength and power, life and action. The human personality is constituted by three elements, viz., will, heart and intellect, and each of these attains growth and development by its being directed

towards an object of love and admiration, towards the ideal for which the hero stands and to which he devotes his life. The heart feels for the ideal, the intellect devises the ways and means of realising it, and the will drawing strength from either expresses itself to the best of its power and executes the plans well conceived by the intellect and ardently cherished by the heart. Psychologically, then, it is the whole personality that acts and is lifted up thereby above its ordinary levels by deeds of heroism which make it forget its petty narrowness and selfishness and draw it nearer and nearer to the source of strength, and if the object of love is something high and holy, to the very feet of the All-powerful.

HEROISM WEDDED TO GOOD OR EVIL.

If the ideal chosen to be attained is unworthy of the higher instincts of man, if the aim to be accomplished is undesirable, the will, heart and intellect are employed for base purposes. What is called evil in life, is, in fact, but a perverse manifestation of heroic power. Of this Dr. Faustus is an example as he employs all his learning and keenness of intelligence for allying himself with unseen but evil powers for the satisfaction of his lower instincts. There are also good and great manifestations of heroism and prowess. Many an Ulysses spreading his sail in the vast and illimitable Sea of Life has been working from pre-historic times with a will "to strive, to seek, to find, and to yield." Think of one of the bravest of the world's sea-farers facing King Timidity at the Court of Spain fighting against prejudice and ignorance and blindness, until his courage moves a queen to pledge her jewels for the expedition which was to discover America. He sets out on his perilous journey and when he finds himself cast helpless on the bosom of the surging waves of the angry sea, with no hope of seeing land or living being, he sends forth a prayer from the bottom of his heart :

My hands, my limbs grow nerveless,

My brain feels rack'd, bewilder'd,

Let the old timbers part, I will not part,

I will cling to Thee, O God, though the waves buffet me,

Thee, Thee at least I know.

He sails with calm resignation and God eventually hears his prayer and he bursts out in pure joy :

And these things I see suddenly, what mean they ?

As if some miracle, some hand divine unsealed my eyes,
Shadowy vast shapes smile through the air and sky,

And on the distant waves sail countless ships.

And anthems in new tongues I hear saluting me."

Yes. Columbus had indeed the heroism of the higher kind. But instances are not wanting of men who are possessed of the reverse type of heroism, that of evil and unrighteousness. They are the very incarnations of the devil, and examples of them from life are within easy reach. When the great world-war broke out, we had the workings of evil exemplified and demonstrated in the manufacture and employment of nefarious weapons of warfare for land and lucre.

HEROES OF DIVINITY THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Spiritual heroes, heroes who stand on Truth with their heart, intellect and will purified and strengthened to the best of their possibilities are the imperative need of our times. Their heroism will be of the highest. Through their heart will flow divine love, compassion for all beings, love for the noble and the supreme which render life worthy and blessed. Through their intellect will rise not only the knowledge of sciences and the arts, but also the knowledge that transcends the senses and the mind. Through their will will work the will of Lord Himself, the cosmic energy of the universe for the good and elevation of mankind. They will boldly march onward through life's avenue with wondrous vigour and fiery determination. They will be absolutely fearless, for what fear can they have when they will know that they are indestructible and imperishable, that they can play with death as with life? They will be absolutely unattached to their work and its fruits, for how can they have an axe to grind of their own, when they will have nothing to gain and nothing to lose? They will be perfectly pure, for how can they be tainted with greed or lust or passion even for fame, when they will feel and realise divinity in themselves? They will be like the lotus leaves untainted by the water-drops dirty or clear though they may be. They will work and set examples of heroic lives and heroic deeds to their fellowmen. They will be fired with the belief that they can cleave through mountains, crush the stars to atoms, and unhinge the universe, for they know that the Omnipotent will help them and that they themselves are the Omnipotent.

Let him who wants to be a hero of the Kingdom of God, a soldier in the army of Lord, listen to the trumpet-note of divinity and not content himself with vague imaginings, hectic feelings and dreamy philosophisings. Let him act in the living present. Let him live a life worthy in the eyes of the great ancient Rishis and the Rishis of the modern age of whom he is a descendant, so that they may know that he is not only

a child of their body but also of their mind. Does he want to be manly ? Let him be strong,

“ Be strong,

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do and loads to lift,
Shun not the struggle ; face it. “Tis God’s gift.”

Does he want to be heroic ? Let him

“ Then welcome each rebuff
That makes earth’s smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go !
Be our joys three-parts pain !
Strive, nor hold cheap the strain ;
Learn, nor account the pangs ;

dare, never grudge the throe ! ”

Such heroes as have touched the feet of God will build a nation. They will work out its salvation. They will mould its destiny. They will be the real salt of the earth. May He Who is the Life of Life and is dwelling within the hearts of all beings vouchsafe unto us sufficient strength, sufficient purity and sufficient wisdom to become true Heroes in the world !

SOME COMPARATIVE STUDIES*

A. SWAMINATHA AYYAR, B. A.

THE teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and of Swami Vivekananda of blessed memory and the torch of light which has been kept burning by the band of Sannyasins of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission have more than anything else impressed the modern world with the Vedantic ideal of tolerance in religion and love to all. One would not misread the clear signs of the times moving the world of thought towards these ideals, though now they may appear distant and therefore difficult of realisation. We are no doubt witnessing occasional exhibitions of religious and racial animosities. The number of men and women who abhor racial and communal jealousies and rivalries is on the increase and we have organizations for promoting international peace and brother-hood. It is possible that the new spirit may be found to be often based on an intelligent appreciation of the view points of the peoples of the modern world in order to secure the economic well-being of all. The rapprochement that has been aimed at may be regarded as due to enlightened selfishness. Even as such it has to be encouraged as it will serve the basis for any scheme of world reconciliation. But it is only a beginning. The effort at reconciliation will have to be supplemented by an appreciation of the true relationship between God and man which will transcend geographical barriers and racial differences and even differences in religious faiths.

Artificial barriers have been raised in the name of religion to keep people from people and much unnecessary suffering has been caused to and suffered by people in the name of religion. And yet religion cannot be held responsible, if people have acted relying far too much on the non-essentials, forgetful of the underlying truths of religion. The achievement of unity through a proper understanding of the fundamental truths of living religions is possible. Equally possible and potent for good is the unity that could be achieved through letters and art as represented by the movement inaugurated by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore in his *Viswa-Bharati* and by Prof. Nicolas Roerich and Dr. Cousins for example in the field of art. Here we are confined to the field of religion. The unity that is sought to be achieved by a proper appre-

*Comparative Study Series, by Swami Paramananda, published by the Vedanta Centre, Boston, U. S. A. — (1) *Christ and Oriental Ideals*, (2) *Emergence of Vedanta*, and (3) *Plato and Vedic Idealism*.

eration of the religious faiths, held sacred by the different races of mankind, and which shape their political conduct, though slow of effect, will in our opinion be of more lasting benefit to mankind.

Let us premise by stating that the object of surveying the world of religion and making a comparative study of it is not to prove the superiority of one religion over another, or even to produce a common religion, but to find a sympathetic chord which may serve as a common synthesis for all. Religion is the realization of Truth, that is, God. The Upanishads ask, "By knowing which supreme reality can the entire cosmos become known?" They answer, "By knowing God," that is, by realising Truth. God is also Love. To realise Truth is therefore to love God, i. e., His creatures who are His children. The heart of every religion is vibrant with life. We have to reach that heart. If we endeavour to do so by living the life, we shall find that it is always the same Truth which every religion preaches. Ritual and dogma form the non-essential parts of every religion and in order to arrive at the heart of a religion we have to go beyond the stage of ritual and dogma, which while they may be necessary for the observance of a particular religion, are not the fundamental part of it. Any differences which one may find in the teaching of the divine saviours of mankind, Sree Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mahomed, or Zoroaster, are not in their fundamental principles, but in the outer expression which is shaped according to the requirements of the age, people, or the country concerned. An examination of the fundamentals of the great living religions of the world will reveal the fact that God is one without a second and that love and tolerance are the dominant note of the teachings of the prophets. Lord Sree Krishna has said, "In whatever way men worship Me in the same way I fulfil their desires. O Partha I let every way men follow My path!" Again the Lord has said that for the protection of the good and the destruction of the evil, "I am born from age to age." His promise is not confined to any particular country or age. It is always the same Infinite Being that has given the message from time to time. And we would be foolish indeed if we do not recognise the One Universal Father under all His varied forms, although He is invoked in different names in different countries. We are His children and all are brothers. Lord Christ's teaching "Love thy neighbour as thyself" is only the popular rendering of the old saying of the Hindu sages "Thou art That." The meaning is that we are all one and if a person hurts a neighbour he hurts himself. The Quran thus affirms this eternal and immutable Law: "Save your fellow beings; love all creatures; do unto them what you wish to be done to you. Know that all are brothers to one another and that we

are one in brotherhood." Religion studied in this way will enable us to realise true brotherhood which is synonymous with love and tolerance. We are not to be understood as advocating the idea of a common or universal religion. It can never be that one set of doctrines should or will be believed by all mankind. Variety is the first principle of life. In realising the fundamental unity of religions we have to recognise this fact. But mere recognition of the ideal will be of no avail unless we realise it each one of us in our daily life. No amount of talk or writing will bring us nearer the ideal. We have to live the life, in the full knowledge that the divine will and the universal will are one and when we unite ourselves with the divine will, we work for the good of humanity. And whether one is a Christian, a Muhammadan, a Jew or a Hindu, if he has the same living faith in God the same ungrudging love for His children, then we are truly living religion and carrying out the divine will. The Lord Christ has beautifully expressed this idea when he said, "Do the will of thy Father." This should be the aim of a comparative study of religions, which should enable us to break the barriers in order to arrive at a harmonious blending of the true and the fundamental in every religion and bring about a glorious fulfilment. In this conception of universal religion based on a comparative study of living religions, there can be no place for aggressive propaganda or conversion from one faith to another which will be meaningless from the point of view of higher truth such as we have conceived and tried to present. As the Blessed Lord Sree Krishna has said, all that is good and beautiful proceed from Him. There is naught in the universe without His love and life; there is no beauty that is not His beauty, that is not a ray of His illimitable splendour, one little beam from the unfailing source of life. It is in this spirit that the underlying principles of all religions should be viewed. No greater service could be rendered to religion than to so broadcast the truth that God who is the source of all religions never intended that the world should be the scene of warring faiths. Each religion has its own mission to fulfil and it must be helped to do so by the fullest expression of its individuality. In that way will be avoided the dwarfing by uniformity. The aim of the seeker after truth will be to find out the fundamental harmony in all phases of higher thought as represented by the living religions, acting like the mythical Indian swan which when it is given milk mixed with water is able to separate the milk. Truth has no boundary lines and can take no account of geography, language or legends. It is not the exclusive property of any one group of people but is the common property of the whole human race and is equally open to all who can claim it. It includes in its scope all forms of

thought which do not represent rival phases of belief but different degrees of spiritual development, each having special appeal for certain types of mind. We firmly believe that in this way we shall be able to achieve the general evolution of the human family. These reflections have been occasioned by the perusal of the excellent studies in comparative religion by Swami Paramahansa Yogananda's work in America, a product of many of the great thoughts of which is already bearing fruit.

S. RAMANATHA AYYAR

The cross stood on the Mount of Calvary, little did the Roman Governor know that the influence of one Man was going to undermine and pull to pieces the mighty empire of the Caesars. Thirteen hundred years have elapsed since the holy Prophet of the desert of Arabia infused new life into the heart of his countrymen. Baghdad becomes a centre of learning and Saracenic culture spreads from Delhi to Grenada. The weary world torn up by internal strife and fratricidal wars is once more in need of the Waters of Life. This blessed land of the Rishis has again the privilege of giving birth to the Fountain of Spirituality. The message of harmony which originated at Dakshineswar has already encircled the world.

The potency of love is often overlooked by the superficial observer. Movement and feverish excitement count for activity, whereas the subtler forces which do their work slowly and silently pass unnoticed. Sunlight and dew nourish the flower-bud but their effect remains unseen until the blossom opens out its petals. In like manner mighty changes brought about by spiritual forces lie hidden until the fulness of time reveals them to the outside view. But it is easy, even for the most casual observer, to admit that purely moral virtues such as honesty, perseverance, and punctuality are more or less marketable commodities. Woe to the tradesman who does not recognise this fact. But it is not everyone who understands the value of deeper virtues such as selfless love. The ordinary man has a very limited individuality, perhaps extending to his wife, children and near relatives. Still within that narrow limit he could observe the amount of power which love manifests. The man may be a miser who would not readily give a pice to a poor man. But suppose his beloved child falls sick, money flows freely and the ablest doctors are called in to save the child for whose sake the man was accumulating all his wealth. Say the little one dies, the man loses all his enthusiasm and becomes dejected and forlorn. It appears as if the mainspring of all his activities had suddenly ceased to function. The beloved child was that mainspring and love was the driving force. The mighty Emperor who may have conquered and subdued half-the-world would in the sanctuary of his home be the abject slave of someone whom he dearly loves. Love conquerors all. If the sentiment of

love is centred upon a lofty ideal, it helps to elevate the soul. On the other hand, if the object of love is low and unworthy, deterioration is the natural result. Anyway either for good or bad, love is a power and a tremendous power too. As the great transcendentalist Emerson says, "Love begets life." All creative activity finds their basis upon self-forgetting love. And again creative art has supplied the ideals upon which the whole fabric of society rests. Political emancipation and economic amelioration are, indeed, desirable. But, they are to be sought for not as ends in themselves but as the means for the acquirement of spiritual excellences. Pure selfless love is the cause as well as the outcome of spiritual enlightenment. Once the flame of selfless love is kindled in the heart of a person, he becomes connected to the Source of all Energy. Obstacles make way for him and he becomes a power for good.

Infinite are the spiritual excellences which man may set up for himself to struggle and attain. The perfect man resembles a well-cut gem having hundreds of facets each of which reflects a different shade of colour. The birds and beasts of the field appear to be the organic manifestations of some one quality or other. If the abstract quality of bravery and courage is to take a visible form, it cannot but be the form of a lion; a pig is just a visible representation of dirt and gluttony; the peacock with its display of colours is the personification of vanity. In man alone we find an infinite variety of inherent characteristics. Nevertheless what makes man a man is the quality of love which lies implanted in his heart. Man attains to the perfection of manhood in proportion to the extent to which the quality of love is developed in him. When the spiritless love is developed to its fullest extent so as to cover the whole world man transcends the limitations of his personality and becomes divine. Men in whom the flame of selfless love burns brightly, but who still possess traces of egotism become heroes or demigods, sturdy champions for the cause of the Motherland.

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" says the Roman poet. "It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country." Yes, but what is exactly meant by one's country? Has the term nothing more than a geographical significance? Is the sacrifice to be made for the sake

The Beauty and
Worth of Human
Nature.

The Vision of a
better World.

those who are living in it now and those who might happen to live in it hereafter or does the term country stand for the whole past, present and future of the commonwealth to which one belongs. The spirit that kindles in the heart the love of selfless devotion to the Motherland seems, at any rate, to be concerned with the past as much as with the present and the future. Men often die fighting for a symbol but it is not the dead symbol but the spirit around the symbol which urges them on to the highest sacrifice. Again the association of men in the commonwealth itself may be viewed from three fundamental aspects, the political, the economic and the spiritual. One of these three aspects should, of course, be the theme. Which aspect should be considered of primary importance if a true federation of the nations of the World is to be realised fact? Association based upon economic values may for a time appear stable and sound but a state of affairs in which the life of one person is the loss of another cannot continue for long. Political emancipation is not identical with individual emancipation and a democracy itself is so far an unrealised ideal and would remain practically unrealisable unless and until it is viewed from a higher standpoint. Politicians with a narrow range of vision may cleverly manipulate phrases and formulae to make the worse argument appear the better, but unless the principles that they put forward are based upon the solid foundation of Truth, the superstructure is bound to tumble down sooner or later. Covenants and conferences just cannot make a better world, unless there is a change of heart and a sincere desire to usher in a better state of affairs. Would to God that the men who are placed at the head of affairs in the various states which constitute the world have a wider vision of their responsibilities to God and man. The interdependence of various states is now so complete that the comity of nations should make for sincere revaluation of what were formerly known as diplomatic relations. So long as any one nation remains enslaved, there cannot be lasting peace in the world. So long as the directing of the destiny of any one nation rests in the hands of reckless men who would not hesitate to betray the best interests of their country for the purpose of filling pockets which are already overfull there cannot be any true peace in the world. Looking a little deeper it is easy to see that true political emancipation and lasting economic amelioration are in themselves dependent upon true and sincere

international understanding which becomes possible only if *śāstra* is reconstructed upon an absolutely spiritual basis. When *Dharma* declines everything else declines and when *Dharma* is set aright everything else sets itself aright.

“Education has yet to be in the world, and civilisation has begun nowhere yet, ninety decimal nine per cent of the human race more or less savages, even now,” these are words expressed by the Swami Vivekananda in one of his lectures. The vaunted civilization of the ancient Greeks is just a removed from barbarism. Their great epic reveals to us that the existing at that time was wholly swayed by the primitive passion of uncivilised humanity. As for instance the incident which led to the withdrawal of Achilles from the contest holds up Agamemnon as the type of man in whom the savage has as yet not given place to the civilized man. The last war with its terrible carnage inhuman methods is a blot on Western civilization. Man becomes truly civilised, nay humanised, only when he hearkens unto the voice of the spirit discarding the siren voice of worldly enjoyments, world-order based upon Truth and international sincerity and individual conduct based upon control of senses and brotherly love, and these alone could form a lasting basis of civilization.

THE TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA.

Extracts from the report of a lecture which Sri Swami Sharvananda delivered at the Marwadi Vidyala Hall under the auspices of the Buddha Society, Bombay.

The Swamiji said that the literature of Buddhism was a vast one, and he would lay before the audience the conclusions he came to from his study of some of the accepted works on Buddhism, both the Mahayana and the Hinayana Schools. Naturally he viewed the whole thing from the standpoint of a Hindu, because he believed that Buddha was born a Hindu, lived a Hindu, and died a Hindu, and he would from that standpoint essay the whole life and doctrines of Buddha. The Aranyakas, which formed the second part of the Vedas, contained the highest wisdom of the Vedānta known as the Upanishads, the doctrines of which were

ys considered as secrets as they were studied by the forest
 ses and seldom given out to the outside world. The highest
 s of the Vedanta were thus sometimes forgotten by the
 aday people, and time and again the Karmakandas of the
 as were considered supreme. In fact, from ancient times there
 two schools existing in this land, the Mimamsakas and the
 antists, the former basing their tenets on the Karmakandas
 ng that the *summum bonum* of life consisted in the realisation
 avenly beatitude and that the means for its attainment was
 performance of certain sacrifices. The Vedantists believed
 the *summum bonum* of life could not be attainment of
 nly bliss, which was a thing liable to be lost, but in trans-
 ing the limitations of life such as time, space and causation,
 supreme bliss meant the realisation of Atman, that Supreme
 ity where there was no change, no limitation. But this fact
 found obscured as the nation marched through the different
 s of life. Some 500 years before the Christian era the whole
 try was submerged in the ideas of this wordly bliss, enjoyment
 heavenly bliss and the performance of complex rituals to that
 and the sacred truths of the Vedanta were forgotten. It was
 xecularity of Indian life, its soul, that whenever there came a
 rbance in the grasp of the national mind about the reality of
 here came forth in the form of a manifestation a great soul to
 just the broken equilibrium. Thus was it that in the period
 en of there arose a person in Lord Buddha to readjust the
 ony. That was why even though his teachings were tabooed
 resy Buddha was and is still worshipped by the Hindus as
 f the ten incarnations of Vishnu, for in their heart of hearts
 Hindus still believed that what he lived and taught was not
 de the region of Hinduism.

The Swami then narrated the story of the Buddha's life,
 ibing his wonderful renunciation, his long austerities and final
 tenment under the Bodhi Tree. The Swami then narrated
 hereafter the Buddha came out and began to preach his
 ine of Dharma and his religious paths till the 80th year of his

Essentially his teachings were of ethics and morality. Dur-
 is lifetime he did not bother himself about eternal verities.
 gave up caste. He taught that everything we perceived with
 enses was momentary, that all these things were a negation

and were empty. His main doctrines consisted in the analysis of the conditions of life as well as the goal of life. He first started with the problem of human misery and suffering, its causes and the path for its cure. Real misery, according to him, was what its cause was individuality, distinctness. When we felt that we were individuals and distinct from everything else this individuality brought in conditions and limitations, limitation always meant ignorance; ignorance meant error, and error always led to misery and suffering. Our individuality, which was the result of primary *avidyā*; was formed of five aspects: external form, sensation, effect of karma, ideas, egoism or consciousness of existence. The individual was a compound of these five things which were constantly changing. The first basic principle of the different schools of Buddhism was this flux of existence. When we asked this idea of change as the reality of the relative world, where was pleasure in a permanent state? Everything was changing, physical as well as mental existence. Next everything under the sun was a compound, which had no individual existence apart from its component parts. But wherever there was a union of elements there was the liability of disintegration, that is, destruction. Every moment there was a change. The existence of the present moment was causing the existence of the next. Thus the whole series of existence was only a process of cause and effect. Similarly, there was nothing permanent and individual, but such was the great *māyā* of ignorance that we clung to our individuality. Our individuality produced in us a desire to possess, to go beyond our limitations, these desires blurred our vision of truth, we committed errors and suffered. What was the cure for this suffering? The destruction of the misery. That was called *Nirvāṇa* and it was a state of negation of all these five skandas, the cessation of all change. Some Buddhist scholars believed that this *Nirvāṇa* was not a negation of existence. It was described by Buddha as a state of positive joy, but it meant the destruction of the relative existence, because the absolute meant a negation of the relative and *vice versa*. When man looked towards the absolute the relative was closed from his view, and when he looked towards the relative he did not see the absolute. When we saw the world the relative existence, the absolute was negative, but when the flux of life was stopped and all the ingr

is that made the flowing of life were destroyed, the relative individuality ceased to exist, and what remained behind was the one absolute, Nirvana. That was the Nirvana as it was spoken by Bhagawan Buddha. The Nirvana state was one of transcendental existence where all relative passions and relative life were washed. That was the end of misery and was the *summum* of life exactly the same as the term *Moksha*. Buddha said:—"Purity is the beginning of spiritual life and love is the end of it. Only he who is pure can expect to go step by step and enter the Nirvana which is love itself," It was described in the panishads as *Ananda*, because it was through love that real *Ananda* came. From *Ananda* creation came, in it creation existed and to it it went back. So Buddha said that this noble path began from purity and ended in universal love, because when the individual consciousness was gone there arose love for all. Such a man hated none and felt anger for none. Buddha proved at every step of his life the truth of his message.

The Swamiji then briefly dwelt on the different schools of philosophy which arose after Buddha under two important groups; the Mahayana and the Hinayana, representing the Northern and Southern schools respectively. He remarked that in the latter as in Ceylon more emphasis was laid on the ethical than on the philosophical side of Buddhism, which appeared to him to reflect the greatness of that religion.

BUDDHISM AND TAMIL LITERATURE.

(By Brahmachari Prabôdha Chaitanya.)

The earliest existing records in the history of the Tamil language take us back to the hermitage of Agastya. From that hoary antiquity up to the second century of the Christian era the Tamil *Vâni* lived amidst the splendours of royal courts. The Third Sangam—the assembly of poets instituted by the Pandyan kings—came to a close somewhere about the beginning of the third century and the Tamil Muse all weary of court life sought the peaceful surroundings of Buddhist and Jain monasteries and stayed there for well over six centuries. It was during this period that the five great narrative poems known as the *Mahakavyas* and the five

smaller *kavyas* were composed. Of the Mahakavyas three extant, and of the smaller kavyas two are available. *Manimekalai* one of the existing Mahakavyas is of special interest to the student of Buddhism. Of the lost works—fragments of which are available—*Neelakesi*, *Kundalakesi* and *Valaiyapathi* are essential Buddhistic works. One canto of *Manimekalai* which runs up about five hundred lines gives a lucid and brief account of the tenets of Buddhism. Besides that, throughout the whole narrative incidents turn up to throw light upon the personality and teaching of Buddha Deva. We shall attempt to give a brief appreciation of this beautiful poem from the point of view of a student of Buddhism and shall do this by giving a bare outline of the narrative, laying special emphasis upon those passages which appeal more strongly than others to the followers of Buddha Deva.

In days of yore, in the city of Kaverippumpaddinam the annual festival of Indra was celebrated with much pomp and merriment. As the festive days were approaching the chief herald of the city lifted a mighty drum on to the back of an elephant and striking it with great force, proclaimed to the people the following benedictory announcement,

“ May this ancient land prosper for ever,
 May the clouds bestow rain thrice every month,
 May the king's sceptre deviate not from the course
 should take,
 The mighty Indra, the four great gods and other denizens
 of the celestial regions.
 Would soon be here, leaving the golden city as empty
 as our city was
 When Karikal the Great marched northwards with his
 legions.
 Therefore, O, ye citizens! erect triumphal arches every
 where,
 Let the slender areca-palm, and the plantain with
 bunches, and chandeliers in the shapes of nymphs be
 seen in all the streets, adorning and beautifying
 the city.
 May the brahmanas versed in the sacred lore perform
 the right kind of worship to the various Deities,
 From Mahadeva down to the guardian spirit of this city

May learned pandits resort to the halls of debate, and
may the Wise rest in shady groves imparting instruction
to those who seek them.

May there be no strife or quarrel during the eight and
twenty days when the sons of gods would walk
amidst the sons of men."

The proclamation of Indra's festival was received with universal rejoicing. The absence of dear ones, however, was strongly and Chitrapathi was extremely sorrow-stricken. Her daughter Mathavi and grand-daughter Manimekalai who were present at year's celebrations would not any more mingle in the joy of the city. For they had renounced the pain and the pleasure of the world and having taken refuge in a Buddhist nunnery. With a heart full of anguish Chitrapathi summoned Vasanthamala, the former friend-in-waiting of her daughter, and asked her to go and persuade Mathavi to return to the world. Vasanthamala accordingly goes and endeavours to persuade. Mathavi in reply says "True that I am by birth the daughter of a courtesan, but I knew no man save my wedded lord Kovalan. In life and death I remained faithful to him. Having seen the glorious example of the goddess of chastity (Kannaki) do you think that I would lead yonder innocent girl, Manimekalai, to a life of shame. Tell my mother that I shall return at no cost. Besides that, since the time I am taking refuge at the sacred feet of this sage, my master and confiding to him the events which culminated in the sad death of my husband, he has given me words of consolation and has taught me the doctrines of the Thathagatha.

"They who take birth suffer the stings of misery,
They who cease from birth enjoy everlasting bliss
The former are those who are caught in the meshes
of desire

The latter are those who are free therefrom."

"He also explained to me the nature of the Pancha Seelas and pointed out to me the path of release." Hearing these words Vasanthamala heavy of heart retraced her steps homewards.

Manimekalai being reminded of the death of her father was moved to tears. A few tear-drops fell on the altar flowers that she was weaving into a garland and consequently they were rendered less. Mathavi insisted on Manimekalai going out herself and

fetching fresh flowers for the worship. Suthamathi, another who happened to be close by, offered to accompany the young and the two passing the city-streets entered into the park on outskirts of the city. There in the midst of the park stood a crystal palace in the centre of which was a jewelled seat of marble, shaped in the form of a blossoming lotus. This was a seat dedicated to the Blessed One and its virtue was such that flowers placed upon it as offering to any particular deity immediately left the seat to reach the feet of that deity. If no particular deity is thought of, the flowers remained where they were left. The architect of gods fashioned this seat to prove that actions unattended by consciousness of purpose bear no fruit.

The season was at its best and the two young nuns were picking flowers. The prince Udaya Kumar, the crown prince of the realm had contracted an unlawful passion towards Manimekalai and desirous of having a sight of her and learning that she had just then entered into the park drove his chariot in that direction. The noise of the approaching chariot forewarned Manimekalai of the impending danger and she asked Suthamathi, where it would be best to hide herself to escape from the gaze of the prince. "Come to the crystal house, I shall pull the latch on and the prince will not trespass into the sanctuary of the Blessed One to touch the person of one devoted to Him," said Suthamathi. Accordingly Manimekalai entered into the crystal house. The prince came soon after and desired to know where Manimekalai was. In reply Suthamathi said,

"Your glorious ancestor Karikal the Great, so great was his sense of propriety,

That he chose to wear a wig of greyish hair

Before he appeared in the open court to decide a case between two aged men.

To a scion of such a noble family, how can I a poor woman teach the rules of conduct.

Nevertheless hearken to the noble precepts of the Blessed One.

What is the nature of that physical frame which seems to charm you so much?

It has been fashioned by the law of Karma and it exists as the abode of the same Karma.

Remove the sandal paste and jewels that adorn it, and
then you see it even as it is,

Age and disease and miseries untold find their perman-
ent abode in that vile frame;

Know this and cease to harbour any lustful feeling
towards that young nun who has chosen to tread
the path of blessedness.

Hearing this the young prince thought within himself, well, let
Suthamathi waste her words as much as she likes, I shall stay out in
the streets and carry off my prize to Chitrapathi and then we shall
see whether the dictates of common-sense or this nonsense of
asceticism holds the upper hand. Turning again to Suthamathi
the prince asks her, "How is it that I see you here, were not you
in the Jain monastery the last time that I saw you. In reply the nun
told him of the greater compassion of the followers of the
Blessed One. The prince departs and soon after the goddess,
Manimekalai, disguised as a woman, appears, makes obeisance
at the seat of the Blessed One and lovingly inquires why
two nuns were hesitating to leave the park although the
sun was already sinking beneath the western horizon. They
told her the cause of their anxiety. "Well then, go out
by the western gate, and crossing the Chakravallakottam, the
city of the Gods, you could easily enter the city" said the
Blessed One. "Mother" said Suthamathi, "that which is known to
be the cremation ground is called by you the abode of the Gods.
Do I know the significance of your words?" Then follows a long
discourse wherein the goddess explains why that particular place
is known as the abode of the Gods. The sun had already
fallen and a mysterious sleep touched the eyelids of the two nuns in
the midst of which the goddess carries away Manimekalai to the
island of Manipallavam (one of the small islands adjoining the
western coast of Lanka.) The goddess also appears in a dream
to the sleeping prince and tells him,

"O scion of a noble race

Know that if the sceptre deviates from the course it
should take

The very planets depart from their wonted course,

And draught ensues and suffering to life,

Know also that the king's life is bound up with the life of the people.

Discerning these, free thyself from the unlawful lust that thou harbourst in thy mind.

Appearing to Suthamathi the goddess bids her not tarry anxious adding that Manimekalai would be back again in the days' time.

The gentle rays of the morning sun fall upon the sleeper in the far off island of Manipallavam. She wakes up and soon realises the fact of her being cast off alone in a lonely night and espies at a distance a throne of the Blessed One. There stood before her, bathed in the splendour of the morning. With a reverential attitude the heroine of our story approached the holy throne. And as she went three times round it her past becomes unfurled to her mind's eye and stands forth full and clear.

He sees herself living in the ancient city of Idavayam in the country of Gandhara. She is Lakshmi, the wife of Rahula, prince of that realm and one day she happens to meet Thathagatha who in that life is known as Brahmadharmasatva. The Bodhisatva tells her that on the sixteenth day counted from that day her husband would suddenly die being bitten by a poisonous snake and that she as well as he would take their next birth in the city of Kaverippunpaddanam. At this juncture, our goddess Manimekala descends from the celestial regions, bearing flowers in both hands and after making obeisance before the feet of the Blessed One praises our Lord in the following terms,

"Men had lost the faculty of reason,
And ignorant ears had closed themselves to words of wisdom ;

When all was dark, Thou, Sun of Knowledge appeared
on this earth dispelling the mist of false beliefs,
To thee I make obeisance

May my head touch and my tongue praise
This Thy throne, seeing Thee in it."

Manimekalai fell at the feet of the goddess and said "Mother Divine, by thy grace I have come to know my past birth. My husband of my former birth, Rahula, where is he? Would you enlighten me and clear the doubts of a poor girl? The goddess related additional details showing that Udaya Kumar was Rahula in a

birth, and that Suthamathi and Mathavi were in their former elder sisters to the heroine. 'Then the goddess grants her boons—one for changing the form at will, one for travelling through the air unseen, and another for refraining from food, as long as necessary—and then departs.

Deepathilakai the guardian deity of the island makes her appearance and seeing the stranger, enquires of her, whence she had come and what her name was? In reply Manimekalai says, 'Mother, in my past birth I was Lakshmi, the wife of Rahula, now Manimekalai, the daughter of Mathavi. The goddess whose name I bear brought me hither. May I know, mother, who you are?' To this Deepathilakai replies, 'I am the guardian of this island and this holy throne. Close by lies the island of gems (Samanoli) in the midst of which is the great mountain Samanoli where the Blessed One has left the impress of His Feet. Are't those Feet the ship that would help us over the ocean of Samsara. As I went and after worshipping at that sacred mountain have come back here. O holy nun! I have another thing to communicate to thee. Seest thou yonder tank in which the lotus blooms: that is the day and this hour is the hour at which a vessel of gold annually comes to view on its surface. The virtue of the tank is such that food comes out of it inexhaustibly. The vessel may be taken and used only by the pure in heart. Hither shall thou pair and try if the vessel reaches thy hands' So saying they went towards the tank. Manimekalai stretched her hands and lo, the vessel was there in the twinkling of an eye. Full of joy she goes to the throne of the Blessed One and offers praise in the following

"Conqueror of the invincible Mara, Thy sacred feet,
 Conqueror of the six internal foes, Thy sacred feet,
 Thou Who made over to others the fruit of Thy good
 actions, Thy sacred feet,
 Thou Who refused to enter into the joys of the celestial
 regions, Thy sacred feet,
 Thou Who passed beyond the realm of thought, Thy
 sacred feet,
 Thou Who plucked off an eye to help another, Thy
 sacred feet,

Thou Whose ears are closed to lies and harsh word
 Thy sacred feet,
 Thou Whose tongue utters words of wisdom, Thy
 sacred feet,
 Thou who walked into the infernal regions to help the
 sufferers there, Thy sacred feet,
 Thou who put an end to the sufferings of the Nea^u
 Thy sacred feet,
 I take refuge therein and where shall I find words of^{ht}
 cient to praise those sacred feet."

So saying she made obeisance at the holy throne and
 leave of Deepathilakai ascended through the air and soon
 herself in the presence of her anxious mother and friend.

(To be continued).

HARMONY OF RELIGIONS.*

By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariyar, M.A.

The problem of comparative study presupposes certain
 fications necessary for the attainment of the proper attitude
 which it is to be approached. It demands a faith in Ge^u
 the underlying unity of all religions, the study of the or^u
 sources, accuracy of description, respect for the convictio^u
 others, historic insight, sympathy, and synthetic vision.
 student of religion has to specialise in spiritual experience, a^u
 with his own eyes before he begins to coordinate them
 synthesis. The spirit of the age is specially favourable
 attainment of this attitude.

The content of religious experience defies definition.
 you define it you contract it and make it less. Humanity g^u
 under the agony of sin, ignorance, and misery, struggles fo^u
 demption, light, and joy. Every demand implies a res^u
 Hunger indicates an organic need which is satisfied by foc^u
 side. Likewise the longing for God presupposes the prese^u
 God. God is the reality beyond creation, He is immanen^u
 He is also identical with it. He is beyond the individua^u

* The last lecture delivered at the Universal Religious Conference hel^u
 the auspices of the Sri Satchidananda Saugha.

He is in the self, He is the self. God is as much in quest of the soul as the soul is in quest of God. Religion is therefore the life of God in the soul of man and the salvation from sin, ignorance, and misery is secured by the attainment of heaven or Mukti and is defined in terms of redemption, love, and freedom. The sense of God is fulfilled by participating in His glory, co-operating with His purpose, absorption in Divine Bliss or Absolute Identity.

The above record thus reveals a variety of spiritual experience differing in content, kind, and direction, but all religions agree in the development of personal relation with God as the essential condition of spiritual endeavour, constituting its differentia. Religious experience is therefore summed up in the proposition "Thou art God". 'Thou' refers to the human personality, 'That' connotes God and "art" brings out the essential relation between the two in the attainment of freedom, heaven, or Mukti. The study of the content of this personal experience enables us to determine the relative values of different faiths.

Buddhism dissolves individual and cosmic personality into a mere phenomenal empirical process and insists on the attainment of Nirvana by an ethical and spiritual discipline consisting of four precepts, eight paths, and four meditations. Nirvana is the cessation of existence, or a significant positive state of cognition without functioning or the knowledge of 'That.' Jainism postulates the reality of distinct reals or jeevas without an Iswara functionally related to them and devises a course of discipline for the attainment of Mukti in which each monad develops Omniscience and immortality.

Zoroastrianism posits a God contending victoriously with evil. He differentiates Himself into good and evil and allies Himself with good. By a process of purity, piety, and devotion, the soul strives towards God who is the very symbol of purity itself, and when its good outweighs the evil, it attains the kingdom of God.

Christianity traces the relation between God and man in terms of a historic redemptive process in which the Father in person incarnates Himself in His only begotten Son, for the redemption of sin-enslaved humanity. Jesus mediates between God and man. As the son of man he shares in the sufferings of humanity, and as the Son of God releases the redemptive glory of God and lavishes himself in humanity with a view to transfigure the world into a kingdom of God. Muhammadanism rejects

mediation, regards man as the vice-gerent of God on earth and enjoins the followers of Muhammad, the greatest prophet of God, to follow the commandments of God. When the soul thus conforms to God's will in absolute submission and resignation, it attains the felicity of paradise in which there is reciprocal relation between God and man, where God is pleased with man and man is pleased with God and the soul acquires the colour of Allah.

The definition of the nature of the spiritual relation between jeeva and Iswara as revealed in the text "Thou art That" has given rise to the different schools of Vedanta. Madwacha of insists upon differentiation in identity as the only condition for secular and spiritual experience and constructs a method of service and devotion for the attainment of Vaikunta. "Thou art That." Iswara is self-dependent and jeevas, eternally different from God and from each other, are however dependent upon Him. And even in this state of Mukti there is a differentiation in kind and degrees of joy and service. Ramanuja's God is concrete universal or personality revealing Himself in and through the Infinity of atomic jeevas and constituting their very soul. He is Narayana, the inner ruler, immortal, enshrined in the heart being and yet transcendental in His heavenly glory. By building up devotion through Karma, Gnana and Bhakti, or by absolute surrender or Prapatthi to the Grace of Guru and God through the mediation of Lakshmi or the Divine principle of mercy, he reaches the Vaikunta and realises his inseparable association with Him, which there is equality of enjoyment with God without His co-powers. Nimbarka gives a monistic as well as a pluralistic interpretation of the jeeva-Iswara-relation. The jeeva is identical with Iswara or Radhakrishna, yet is different from Him. Vallabha emphasises the advaitic relation of "Thou art That." 'Thou' is the Radhakrishna who is Satchidananda and 'Thou' is the atomic jeeva immersed in the pure Pushti-Bhakti of divine ecstasy. Chaitanya regards God as Krishna losing Himself in blissful communion with Radha in Goloka or Brindavan. The jeeva passes through the various forms of devotion or Bhavas to Madhubhava in which it pines and pants like a maid for divine communion and is finally soaked in the Bliss of His ineffable love. Saivism postulates Pasupathi as the efficient cause of creation—its material cause is derived from Maya, but Srikanta speaks

Siva as the efficient as well as a constituent cause of the universe. The jeeva or pasu frees itself from the fetters of egoism, delusion and desire and attains Kailasa and enters into inseparable relation with God. But the non-dual experience is not the extinction of personality. It only implies co-existence like that of a vowel and consonant. Saktism treats of Sakti as the energising love of Cosmos or the motherhood of God and the attainment of Nirvana. Sakti as a positive state of Bliss higher than that of Sayujya. Sankara establishes the absolute identity of jeeva and Isvara by reference to the inner meaning of "Thou art That." That is the Nirguna Brahman beyond the three gunas, the three bodies, the three bodies and time, space, and causation ; in the same way the jeeva also is beyond all limitation, and by a process of discrimination, detachment and discipline he perceives the identity with Brahman in Samadhic vision. When Maya or perception of duality is thus destroyed he attains freedom even in this very life. Other Advaitins find no need for Iswara and assert the possibility of reaching the same states by mere Vichara. Others think of Brahman as a cosmic life enshrouded in Maya and shining in its own pure form when the veil is removed. Still others speak of the Advaita of Sat and Sound. Anubhava-advaitins reject the illusory story of Sankara and elaborate four stages of advaitic cognition culminating with the knowledge of the Akandaika Rasa.

Each religion claims universality, infallibility, and superiority, and thus baffles every attempt at systematisation. We may however differentiate the variety of faiths into three species, Theism, Pantheism, and Monism, but as these terms refer more to the relation between God and the world than to that of God and man, the terms Dwaita, Vishishta Adwaita and Adwaita, or Bhedavada and Bhedavada and Kevala Adwaita vada may be employed with advantage. For the sake of comparison each may be subdivided into seven states. The theistic experience exhibits itself in seven relations, and God is related to the soul as judge or a moral governor, as Lord and servant, father or mother and son, as friend, as son and parent, and as bridegroom and bride, and these relations are realised respectively by Zoroastrianism, Muhammadanism, Christianity, Hinduism and several sects of Saivism and Jainism. The Abheda experience may likewise be shown to express itself in the seven different states of Nimbarka, Vallabha,

Chaitanya, Saiva Siddhanta, Saktism, Yadhava and Bhaskara. Though Advaita no doubt connotes absolute identity it may also be stated to comprise a seven fold relation with regard to origin and mode of attainment. Advaita is realised in Vignana, Sabtha, Sat, direct perception through Vichara without the aid of Iswara, the fulfilment of Saguna worship, as a limitless light and Anubhava Advaita.

Madwa, Ramanuja and Sankara furnish the rationale and basis for the three species of religion referred to as Bheda Vada, Abheda Vada and Advaita Vada in terms, of logic, ethics, and scripture. According to Madwa every judgment reveals a differentiation of identity in which the subject and object are eternally different. God is beyond the creation, He is self-dependent and jeeva is dependent. Morality consists in the perception of such a differentiation, conformity to His will, co-operation with His purpose and Kainkarya. It insists upon righteousness untainted by evil, the method of salvation, and God allies himself with the good, rewards them in Heaven and the wicked are hurled into Hell. The seven states under this heading are not anthropomorphic conceptions, they connote the inward spiritual relation between God and man. Ramanuja predicates identity in difference as the law of jeeva-Iswara relation. It may be interpreted as a case of identity in connotation and difference in denotation. The jeeva in essence connotes God, though in extension jeeva is atomic and Iswara is Infinite. Scripture speaks of God as the inner ruler, Immortal, enshrined in the infinity of jeevas. The Maya theory of Sankara is opposed to experience, inference and scripture. It leads us in contradictions and affords no scope for moral endeavour or aesthetic delight. Besides if the Maya theory is true, the path for Mukti transcending Maya is itself limited by Maya and therefore offers no scope of freedom. It involves us in subjectivity, offers no explanation for cosmic freedom. The non-dualist therefore constructs a ladder of love to God and ascends to the region of God which consists in co-existence and absorption in the undifferentiated Brahman without identity, and the seven states sketched above refer to different stages in the experience of identity in difference. Sankara takes his stand on scripture and the undoubted advaitic experience of Brahmavadins who perceived God without His creation. The doctrine of Maya affirms the relative reality

the phenomenal life which is however dissolved in the consciousness of Brahman. By means of Karma, Bhakti and Gnana, duality is destroyed and the Absolute stands self-realised. It is not an abstraction from experience but is the fulfilment of it, without its limitations in ignorance, sin, and death.

The harmony of religions can be achieved only by freeing the essence of religion from its historic and cosmological association. History traces the growth of religion from fetichism and animism to monotheism revealed in Scripture. But the origin of a religion cannot account for its validity. Likewise the various theories of creation can claim no finality or infallibility. The theory of creation out of nothing based upon the absolute will of God is a logical demand that something cannot come out of nothing. The universe with its ugliness, inequality, evil and sin is said to originate from Providence. If creation is due to Providence then Mukti implies the absence of it. The theory of creation as due to the sporting spontaneity of God fails to note the purpose of life and it is no consolation to be told that the life of man is the sport of God. The Mayavada is confessedly a negation of the mystery involved in creation. Religion is there, but we are more interested in remedying the disease than in merely curing it.

Jainism and Buddhism have a definite place in the scheme of religions. Buddhism at least with its doctrine of Thatness approaches the Advaita of Goudapada and the Kaivalya of the Sankya. The main concept of Mukti involving Omniscience approximates to Jnanism in the school of Nyaya. Every religion oscillates between *Leibnitz and Spinoza*. All religions must conform to essential requisites : (1) Synthesis of Revelation and Reason, (2) a true view of personality, (3) a belief in one God making for truth, goodness and beauty, (4) an elevating moral tone, (5) a dissatisfaction for worldliness and the thirst for God and (6) an instinct for purification in which the essentials are absorbed and the non-essentials are eliminated.

The harmony of religions may be effected by means of seven principles, viz., (1) Consistency, (2) History, (3) Psychology, (4) Mysticism, (5) Generalisation, (6) Mysticism, and (7) Immanentism. Consistency is the true. All reli

contradictory the true must be accepted and the rest rejected. A straight line is the shortest route between two points and harmony is established by the establishment of one religion and the elimination of false religions without acquiescing them. The historic method seeks to arouse a sympathy for every religion by proving it to be the fulfilment of the past. Every religion reveals the development of its triple movement through dualism non-dualism, and identity., e.g. Christianity speaks of the Father in Heaven, the Kingdom of God within us and the unity of Father and son.

Psychology studies the mentality of each faith and seeks to co-ordinate all e.g., the theist thinks of God as Will and develops Karmayoga in which work is elevated to a worship, the non-theist looks upon God as Love and tries to reach Him through prayer, giving a Godward direction to every emotion. The adept is conscious of God as Thought or the Absolute and devises a discipline for realising It. But will, feeling and cognition are the aspects of the mental process. Though they differ in functioning they all point to a thirst for God as the essential condition for securing salvation. The selection of faiths is dominated by interest or impulse. Pragmatism studies the worth of religions with reference to their work and aims. We do not know what God is but we know what God does. All religions insist upon the fulfilment of Truth, Goodness, Law, Beauty as the highest values of spiritual life, and are therefore identically speaking one and the same. Siva, Vishnu, and Ishvara practically connote the same Being because they all have the same Satwic attributes. Generalisation is the process of religion reducing Truth to Truth. They are arranged in a graduated scale of truth in which the highest place is given to a particular religion. Advaita assigns a place to each religion and regards its experience as the fulfilment of other religious experiences. Mysticism is the direct approach of God. The concept of God is not God. Therefore the mystic invades the Infinite domain in his soul and loses himself in the love and rapture of a ravishing communion. Soaked in God he sees Him everywhere and in all religions. The theory of Immanent Criticism is adopted in this thesis as the best method of reconciling religions. It utilises the value of their methods and seeks to see every faith in its own eyes. It tries to develop a synthetic vision in which the individuality of each religion is preserved and at the same time

It is destined with the rest. It dissolves the rigidity of religion into a self fluid and continuous system converging towards God. The twenty-one religious experiences sketched above may be regarded as the main points in the circumference of a circle converging towards God. Just as different radii meet in the centre so different faiths though mutually exclusive meet in God. Humanity is deposited in every soul and it is its birthright to accept and realise it without any distinction of caste, creed or race. This is the Home of humanity and there may be different mansions in His kingdom. It was given to Sri Rama-krishna Paramahansa to unite the different Bhavas of God and see their underlying unity. The concept of unity of God, the Atmahood of living beings and the harmony of faiths can alone permit a motive for philanthropy, cosmopolitanism and democracy. Till now it has been the ideal of our great geniuses here and there; we hope it will be realised in our time. May Sri Krishna who is the Ahurmazda of the Zoroastrians, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, the Allah of the Muslims, the Bhagavadans, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Shiva of the Shaivites and the Vishnu of the Vaishnavites who is enshrined in the heart of everyone give us this vision !

VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

With Special Reference to the work done at the
Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home,
Mylapore, Madras.

A paper read before the Provincial Educational
Conference, May 1923.

By Rao Sahib C. Ramaswami Aiyengar.

Swami Ramakrishnananda, the first President of the Sri Ramakrishna Math here, had an intense love for the poor and he could not bear the sight of the poor boys wandering in

the streets of the city, ragged, starving and care-worn, not knowing where the next meal would come from. It was, in fact, the sight of such an orphan that made him start this Home. Once, the Swamiji met a boy whose parents had been suddenly carried away by plague and who was thus left all alone in the world with nothing to fall back upon. He was then reading in the Junior B.A., Class. Unable to bear the sight of such suffering the Swamiji approached many sympathetic friends and with their help started the Home.

At its foundation in February 1905 the Home contained seven boarders. They were lodged in a small rented house and carefully looked after. But gradually as the public began to appreciate its scope of usefulness, the numbers steadily increased until in 1912 there were 25 boarders.

As the days passed by, the number of students was steadily increasing and it was becoming more and more difficult to arrange suitable accommodation for them. After several years of struggle therefore the idea of having a permanent habitation for the Home was taken up, especially in view of the timely gift of 15 gross acres of land kindly given by Mr. S.C. Srinivasachariar, son of the late Ranga Bahadur S. Gopalachariar, one of the former Dewans of Travancore. Encouraged by this, an appeal was made to the public for funds. It met with a generous response from all classes of people. The Government also were kind enough to sanction a half-grant and thus we were in a position to erect the new buildings at a cost of Rs. 2½ lakhs, roughly.

After the occupation of the New Buildings in May 1914 there have been several improvements made. A small dispensary with the necessary medicines has been attached as the gift of the Maharajah of Bobbili. A workshop for Vocational Training is now reaching completion. Plans and estimates have also been prepared for the building of a school and it is under consideration to have some residential quarters for the staff in the near future. The object of the Home has been to provide free boarding and lodging to the absolutely indigent yet brilliant students reading in various educational institutions of Madras. At the same time, it is our idea to teach the rising generation the importance of character above all things; to impress on their minds the dignity of labour and to make them appreciate the glory of work.

It was only the other day that our maid-servant absented herself without notice ; but the boys cheerfully cleaned the vessels and swept the floor and did all the other work in the most satisfactory way. No one lagged behind in the hour of need. Even on ordinary days, the internal management of the Home rests entirely with them. They wash the rooms and keep them tidy ; they go to the market and the bazaar to buy the necessary provisions ; they get milk and curdle and churn it, they look after the garden and water the plants ; they serve the food and do the cooking whenever necessary ; they nurse and tend the sick ; they attend to the engine for pumping the water from the well ; they conduct the daily worship with great devotion ; in fact they do everything and it is a great pleasure to watch them at work. Our aim has been to make them useful in every sense of the word, to train them in habits of self-reliance, co-operation and service to fellow-men.

Until June last Religious Instruction alone was given in the Home, the boys being sent to the various Educational Institutions of the district for their *secular* Instruction. But there was a feeling that for the boys to have the full benefit of the Home they should receive their secular instruction also here. After long deliberation, this plan took a definite shape owing to the offer of some of the old boys of the Home, who were graduates, and who with a commendable spirit of self-sacrifice consented to work here on such terms as was absolutely necessary to maintain themselves and their families.

The Home is proud of them all, and this act in itself is a good indication of the value of the training got here.

Not only this ; the Old Boys are helping us in various other ways. They are of immense service to us in maintaining accounts and supervising the general welfare of the students ; some of them also serve in the Lower Secondary Department as honorary

Teachers. Owing to the encouragement thus got from all quarters, the plan for the Residential High School was quickly put into shape and submitted to the Government. It was favourably received and sanction was at once granted to Forms IV, V and VI.

During the current year (1922-23) the classes were held in the school building. No large outlay was needed for furniture, etc. as the students were made to squat on the floor with a sloping desk in front.

The syllabus of studies adopted here closely follows S. S. L. C. Scheme, the only two important deviations being compulsory study of one Vernacular and Sanskrit up to Form and the attempt to teach all subjects (except English) through the medium of the Vernaculars, wherever possible. These attempts have been fairly successful. For example, in Form IV, Elementary science is taught in Tamil, and this secures a better understanding of the subject by the boys besides giving them a training in expression of modern scientific ideas accurately in Tamil.

From what has been said above, it will be seen that there are several points of difference between this Home and other institutions of a similar type. As the teachers and the boys are living together throughout the day and night, it is possible for us to regulate their daily routine and thus have close supervision on the formation of right habits. With this view it is that we insist on early rising in the morning, their attendance at Puja in the evening and their devoting, at least a few minutes a day, to singing in praise of God (either in Tamil as in the Devarnam classes or in Sanskrit as in the stotra classes). Again they are taught practical lessons in cleanliness, in the choice of provisions by going to the market and the bazaar and in self-reliance by being able to do odd duty that may crop up from time to time. For instance, last year our cook ran away and the Home students, especially the boys, ably filled up the gap and cooked and served for all here.

Physical Education as such is also well cared for. The boys have drill in the early mornings for twenty minutes; they have plenty of exercise in the garden in the evenings and games. Many indigenous games are taught here and two tournaments are held annually—one during Dasara and the other during the Home Day Celebrations—and prizes are awarded on these occasions to the successful competitors. We have appointed a Physical Instructor, who, we are glad to note, has thrown heart and soul into the work and spends all his leisure hours attending to the physical well-being of the boys.

An education that aims only at the training of the body and the intellect is of little or no use in the present circumstances in India, when unemployment is staring us in the face, especially for the educated classes. The cry has therefore to make our education more practical and less theo-

make the boys earn their livelihood even when they are learning at school ; in short, to make education, as far as possible self-supporting. The idea has been in the minds of many for a long time ; but it is just now taking practical shape, owing to the keen economic stress in the land. Our aim has been that no boy should go out of the Home without something to hold to in life, which unfortunately is the case with many to-day. Even if a boy fails in his examinations he should feel that he would still be in a position to earn his living by applying himself to other channels of work. The only thing which could satisfy all these conditions was the introduction of Vocational Training, which we have therefore been experimenting upon for the last one year.

The introduction of the training in our Home began in this

During the last summer vacation we had in the Home a number of students who had finished their Examinations and it was not advisable to use their leisure hours in some manual work which would be a sort of diversion, combining with it, at the same time, some utility. Hence a manual training class was started with paper-work first and carpentry a few days later. Not much of capital was required for this enterprise, about Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 was spent on rattan work and some Rs. 50 on carpentry. All that was necessary was to engage the services of two experienced workmen—one for rattan work and the other for carpentry—and to provide them with a few necessary tools to start work.

By the end of the vacation it was found that several boys had cultivated a genuine love for the work and as the articles manufactured by them were sold to the public fetching decent prices they were really proud of their work. The articles thus produced were trays, boxes, flower-baskets in rattan work, and stools, book-rests, etc. in carpentry. They also made the writing desks needed for our School, besides such small things as pen-tube stands, lens-holders, drawing-boards, etc., for the library.

A few spinning wheels were also presented to us by kind friends and the boys who worked at them produced yarn of really good quality, part of which was sold and part preserved as speci-

With this experience behind us, we confidently approach the Government for help in this direction as soon as the School term began. Detailed plans and estimates for a workshop were drawn up, together with a list of tools for use in the carpentry, ratta work, spinning and weaving sections. The estimates went up to Rs. 15,500 on the whole consisting of Rs. 10,000 for the building, Rs. 2,500 for the initial equipment and Rs. 3,000 for the annual recurring charges. The Government were pleased to sanction a full grant for the purpose; with their help therefore the workshop building has almost been completed and when we begin work in the next term we hope to be able to use it.

During the last few months that the scheme has been in operation it might be pronounced a success. Several distinguished visitors who came here and saw it working were pleased with the way in which things were being done here. For instance, Hon'ble Sir Charles Todhunter remarked, "I am quite a convert to the grant for Vocational Training about which, I must confess, I was sceptical, until I saw your Home." The Hon'ble Mr. A. P. Patro the minister for Education said, "the establishment of Vocational Instruction as part of the General Education is an admirable feature of the Home. I observed types of work executed by the students and there is no doubt that the skill and the knowledge which the students obtain here, if developed further, will enable them to make a living without any great difficulty."

The fact is, that much depends on the method of instruction adopted. Every plan for Vocational Training must be made with a view to make it self-supporting. For, it is only by making the training pay, that really satisfactory work can be had. In all things monetary valuation is the only and perhaps the surest test of progress.

Hence our plan of work is to effect the greatest economy possible in every way. We thought it would be a waste of time and money to leave the instructor idle after imparting a few hours of theoretical instruction to the students. We have also taken some working-class lads whom the teacher will train during his spare hours. And these working-class lads are given a certain amount of general education also in the evenings.

In order to facilitate the working of the scheme still further we may throw out a suggestion, that a few workmen also might

employed whom the boys might watch at work and thus learn more. Very often the boys will be in a position to make parts of more elaborate furniture which the workmen might easily fit up. For instance proper planing, making accurate joints, mixing up a really good varnish—all these our boys can do very well;—at least there are a dozen students here, whose work is up to the marketable standard. Again the boys are also made to supervise labour, which is an education by itself.

Still it is a complicated affair to fit this training into the general curriculum and get the work satisfactorily done by boys undergoing general Education. It will be for members of this Conference to go into the general question as to how far this diversion into manual training will interfere with a boy's general studies at school; also whether vocational Training is not of sufficient importance to be admitted as one of the optional subjects in the C. Scheme. It will be for members of this Conference to go into the syllabus of studies for the IV, V and VI Forms and to suggest whether any one of the subjects cannot well be omitted to make room for Vocational Training.

As a lay man I cannot speak with authority on such topics. All that I can do is to narrate our experiences in the Home. To begin with, we made all boys work alternately at rattan work and carpentry for a period of two or three months. By that time it was possible to find out the particular bent of each individual student; after, the class became divided up and was more handy so that individual attention was paid to the boys.

To help us in the additional work a qualified Instructor, who had undergone the Manual Training Course in the Teachers' College, was appointed; and we have great pleasure in finding that this young man has thrown himself enthusiastically into his work and spares no pains to make the scheme a success.

Under his supervision a Scheme of Studies has been drawn up: the models which the boys are asked to do, are arranged in the order of difficulty and the work-sheet is prepared in the form used in the laboratory for Experiments.

To be brief, the Syllabus is as follows:—First of all they are made to know what Vocational Training is, and what its advantages are. Then they are made to learn to draw the plan, elevation and section of the models they would be working at. Next comes the

handling of the tools themselves which is preceded by a correct description of them. Then they are taught about the varieties of timber used in cabinet-work, the difference between seasoned and unseasoned wood, the way in which timber has to be guarded against the liability to crack, shrink or warp in the process of work.

In practical work, the first lessons are in sawing and planing wood to given dimensions. From this they proceed to the making of joints. Then easy exercises are set requiring a thorough knowledge of these joints—such as the making of photo-frames, picture frames and stools of different dimensions. From this again they proceed to more advanced work such as making teapots, letter-rack boxes, hat-stands, chairs, tables and almirahs.

Similarly, in rattan-work the student begins with dressing cane by removing the knots, then splitting it and drawing it into thin strings. Then come easy models such as trays, flower-baskets and waste-paper baskets. Advanced work in this grade would mean the making of cases for thermos flasks, tiffin-boxes, chairs, ornamental work and the weaving of mats.

In order that this Vocational Training might not disturb general lessons, the students work at it outside school hours during holidays. Our school hours are from 9 a.m. to 12 Noon, 2 to 4-15 in the evening; and our school time-table is so arranged as to repeat itself every third day. So our boys work in the Vocational Training shed between 12 and 1-30, the Fourth Form on the first-day, the Fifth the second day, and the VI the third day, going on in a Cycle. The Lower, Secondary classes are at school at 3-30 p. m. and they work in the Vocational Training Section an hour afterwards before going to play.

But this does not mean that the Workshop is empty and instructors idle during the other hours (which would mean a waste of time and money); for it is during this period that the working lads are being taught. 528.35

In carpentry the exercises done so far are sawing and planing along and across the grain, joints of various kinds, picture-frames, teapots, trays, boxes, Letter-racks, chairs, tables, stools, etc. etc. Each model is given a number and the time required to finish it is also indicated. In the attendance every day again, the number of the model he was working at is entered, and at a glance the teacher is able to find out what time a student

er every model and what progress he has been making throughout.

Drawing has also been taught to the boys in connection with carpentry so that they may draw accurate sketches of the models they are to work at beforehand.

So far then it has been possible for us to introduce only carpentry and rattan work. We are at present anxiously looking forward to occupy the new workshop so that Spinning and Weaving might also be in full working order. Our idea is to turn out at least a portion of the clothing necessary for our boys. This will bring in healthy rivalry as the produce of their labour goes back to them. It would in all cases be advisable to give the boys a part of the benefit of their labour when they have made good progress, to encourage them to work well. We have therefore a Scholars' Common Benefit Fund to which we credit a part of the sale proceeds of the finished goods—approximately equal to the wages earned; and such of them, as are in need, are helped out occasionally for their School fees, books, etc.

The finished products are mostly sold away at our own sales to visitors. If a large number of them get stocked, they go out on Sundays and other holidays taking with them the goods made and finding a sale in the streets. The youngsters are keen at this business and they also canvass orders during these sales for many household articles.

And just as they learn to sell articles, they are also taught to make things. Some of the senior boys are sent with the Instructors to buy canes, well-seasoned wood without flaws, tools for work, etc. This develops powers of observation and quick decision, which is itself an art.

I am mentioning to you these trifling details—because it is these that form the conditions of success if Vocational Training is to be published elsewhere on a stable basis. First of all the classes must be handy so that individual attention may be paid to every one of them by the Instructors. Secondly, not a bit of material is wasted—some use or other being found for those parts which would usually be thrown away as being superfluous. Thirdly, a variety of subjects would have to be introduced to cater to the different tastes of the pupils. In this connection the list published by the Department of Public Instruction is of great use, the subjects they recom-

ment being Carpentry, Rattan work, Spinning and Weaving, Telegraphy, Tailoring, Book-binding, Aluminium and other metal work, Electric wiring and fitting, Mat-weaving, etc. Even of these the choice of subjects would depend largely on the condition of the locality where the schools are situated. In the Tinnevely District where the (கொரை) *Korai* grass abounds, mat-weaving can be started with advantage. In the neighbourhood of Nandyal in the Kurnool District, where we have good cane growing in plenty, wicker-work can be started with profit. In Coimbatore, Madura, Ramnad, Tinnevely and other cotton-growing districts Weaving and Spinning will be most suitable. In centres like Kumbakonam, Palghat and other places metal work especially in brass, tin, bronze etc, can be easily made to pay. In the sheep-farming districts like Cuddalore and Bellary, weaving wool into blankets might easily suggest itself, while in sea-side districts string-work and the weaving of nets and woodwork applied to the various needs of the fisherman could be followed with advantage. Toy-making may also be made a specialty as in some of the Andhra Districts. On the other hand, subjects such as Electric wiring and fitting would have to be confined to Schools in the City of Madras.

Fourthly the time spent at the Vocational Training must be at least half-a-day per week so that the instruction might not be intermittent but continuous and effective. Then again the usual excuse of students from attending such classes should never be admitted for once they become irregular, the instruction would be of no benefit whatever.

Fifthly, the models made by the students must be sold in the market. To facilitate this, it is advisable to maintain a show-room where the finished articles will be on exhibit to visitors and from sold easily to the public. The articles should bear the name of the maker and the selling price—so that it would be an incentive to the boys to give the best finish they can for the work on hand.

Many people would be willing to buy their requirements through such an agency. Chairmen of Municipalities, Presidents of Taluk and District Boards and Heads of Government Departments might be induced to place their orders with the Schools for their requirements. Also School-requisites such as tables, benches

Chairs, desks, boards, map-stands, etc, may be made in the workshop with advantage.

It has been our experience that the boys who are very backward in their general studies show a marked aptitude for manual work. They should be specially encouraged in this direction. For this would be their only way of earning an independent livelihood. They might not perhaps become millionaires but certainly they would get an honest living by this means and what is more they would become centres of usefulness to themselves and others.

And now I shall try to meet the common criticisms levelled at Vocational Training as such—especially because the controversy is at present raging in the press. The argument is trotted out and speciously supported by means of a quotation from the 'Times Educational Supplement' that because the Carnegie Foundation in America denounces the system of Vocational Training as an educational Farce, it must be also a failure in India. Now conditions in America are quite different from those in India and so it does not follow that because it is a failure there, it must be a failure here too. And if we are to start on such a basis there will be no progress whatever. Further, it is much better to evolve our own solutions for our problems than imitate wholesale whatever is being done in foreign countries.

The second argument brought against it, that the boys thus trained in Vocational Training would be left adrift on society without any means of livelihood, thus increasing the problem of the unemployed rather than giving a solution to it. Now this arises from a mistaken conception of facts. As I have already pointed out these young men after the three years training (in the IV, V and VI Forms), additional year or two if necessary, would not only be learning something during their period of study but would become skilled workmen and masters of their craft, fit to hold their own as professional men. And for such young men the field of employment is practically unlimited. They may go out as Manual Training instructors and teachers in other Schools which are at present deterred from introducing Vocational Training for want of suitable teachers; if they are fairly well-to-do youths they may take up contract-work and thus fill a long-felt need in the business-world: for, contracts entrusted to these young, intelligent and enthusiastic workers will

be better done than those given to the present-day illiterate men. Or they may start a small shop of their own with a capital of Rs. 1,000 or thereabouts and in a year or two they would be making an honest and independent livelihood by themselves. Or, yet again, they may become sturdy, honest and intelligent workmen, earning a rupee or two per day and with every prospect of becoming foremen and increasing their prosperity as the days pass by. In every way they would be much better as employees than the usual workmen we have at present in India.

But the fact is that such criticisms as are made in the newspapers arise, not out of a genuine desire to understand facts as they are and to suggest improvements but out of sheer indifference to any forward movement. They like the older order of things and are averse to all kinds of progress. And I am not unaware of such damping criticisms, for I have had more than my share of them. For example, when I was about to start this Home, several gentlemen whom I approached for help seriously asked me what was the use in giving English Education to our youths when Female Education was in dire need of help. When I asked them for help in the cause of Female Education they would turn round and say that it was a waste and that attention should chiefly be directed in the matter of reviving our industries. When again they were approached to take up shares in some industrial concerns they would quote the instance of one or two Indian companies which failed and what chance of success the new venture had. Thus they would be arguing in a vicious circle leading nowhere except to blank despair.

As men of commonsense and prudence what we have to do is to go on with our work heedless of such hostile criticism from interested quarters but to throw ourselves with greater earnestness in our work so that it may result in success, sure and certain.

Our own experience here, leads us to think that perhaps during the first year it may not be self-supporting. As again there is the satisfaction that our boys have learnt a practical and a practical way. But later on it is sure to be a self-supporting concern, thus profiting all parties and being a source of instruction and inspiration to our boys. To illustrate this general statement, I may add that even during the first year here we were not working at a great loss. No doubt we were working at some loss during the first half-year; but matters improved during the second-half. The

Loss is mainly due to the fact that during the early stages, boys waste the materials in learning work. But even this loss is compensated by the grant so kindly sanctioned to us by the Government. In fact the recurring grant sanctioned by the Government is intended only to cover this wastage of materials besides, of course, meeting the establishment charges, etc.

• In this connection, it is a great pleasure for us to convey our heart-felt thanks to the Government of Madras in general, and the Educational authorities and the Hon'ble the Minister in particular for their ready help whenever we approached them for advice or guidance or financial assistance. The more we work at it the greater is our conviction that Vocational training is a valuable supplement to General Education and that therefore it must be given a fair trial and a sporting chance in order to make its influence felt here.

Gentlemen, one word more and I have done. I confess I am not an expert ; I have been only giving out the experience that I have derived from my blessed privilege in having been connected with the Home in such an intimate and thorough manner. I am also aware that I am addressing a gathering of teachers—those who belong to one of the noblest professions in the world. And so I beg to tender my apologies if I am in any way falling short of the standard expected.

As those who are accustomed to training of youth, may I suggest to you the necessity of starting such homes elsewhere in the Presidency also? One Home for the whole Presidency is hopelessly inadequate for our needs. In other populous centres such as Madura and Trichinopoly there is doubtless scope for the starting of such homes. Now that I am talking to you about the starting of such homes, may I tell you that it is not really *infra dig* to receive paying boarders. It was only the other day that I saw a small Home started on novel lines by a humble teacher at Cuttack on the banks of the river Mahanadi. He has got with him twenty boys to look after. Not all of them are free boarders. Those whose expenses can be borne by their parents are allowed to pay for their boarding and lodging. For the rest the teacher gets help from the public and supports the poor boys. The main advantage of such Homes is that they would be an easy solution for the question of training the character of boys who have to live in large

cities and towns, away from the steady influences of their parents or other near relations.

If some of you present here will take up the idea and work it, modifying it of course to suit local conditions, I am sure we can have the great advantages of the ancient *Gurukula* while not foregoing modern conveniences.

In such problems we may well copy the method of the Christian Missionaries at work. Last year, for example, I had the pleasure of visiting the Jesuit Home at Kodaikanal and if I was struck by any thing there more than by any other, it was by their practical teaching of the dignity of labour. There the Fathers do all the work themselves, from cleaning and washing, to buying and selling articles, from lecturing to students and reading books of various kinds to cooking and washing their clothes, everything is being done by themselves. And what is even more remarkable, the man who lectures to college students in Literature, Philosophy or Science, does not consider himself in anyway more important than the man who cleans the vessel or sweeps the floor and serves the meal. All labour is blessed; all work is dignified in their eyes; and it is only when the glory of work, of all kinds of work, especially manual work, is correctly realised in India, that we can see the dawn of the new era of prosperity. That would indeed be the blessed day when he who works with the brain, hails his brother who works with the muscle as a comrade in every sense of the term. When will that Blessed Day dawn in India-- oh when!

REVIEWS

Soul's Secret Door : Poems, by Swami Paramananda
published by the Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass, U. S. A.

They who have read the prose works of the author of "The Path of Devotion," have felt a peculiar fascination in them. A book of poems such as the one that is presented now has been long expected.

As the outpourings of a devotional soul the seventy-two poems contained in the "Soul's Secret Door" have in themselves the power of communicating to the reader's heart the painless pain of longing for the Lord.

Wither lies the source of poesy? he reed pipe when
 led by the lips of the Divine Cowherd of Brindaban showers
 strains of soul-stirring melody. Thus doth the Lord's whis-
 per fill the heart of the devotee with unending song :

"Thy whisper hath filled my soul with an unending song.
 In noise and stillness, in crowd and alone, Thy gentle tone is
 always in my ear.

Thy breath like sweet perfume hath soothed all my sense-
 cravings.

The touch of Thine immortal hand is ever upon me.
 I am filled! Filled am I from all sides".

The Lord Himself is the Mysterious Guide to the unknown
 of eternal bliss.

"Come hither, O friend, I shall tell thee the secret of this
 unknown land.

Let us shut the outer gates and the inner doors.

Have no fear or doubt, for the strange Guide to this unknown
 land is marvellous wise.

He knoweth our unacted acts, nay, even our unformed
 thoughts, our life's pulsation and every heartstring in His
 grasp.

So be thou sober, yet not cunning, for He loves the guileless
 most and it is the helpless that He helps.

The perfect land of unbroken life, so near to the inward
 sight, yet far removed from mortal light!

close my eyes in utter trust:

Lead me on, Thou Guide Divine.

Who where lies that inmost shrine!"

Complete self-surrender to the Lord brings to the devotee a
 of utmost safety. "Not I, my Beloved Lord, but Thou
 knowest what is good for me" is the burden of the devotee's

It is best that Thou dost hold my hand and lead me
 where'er Thou deemest.

I shall follow Thee now with unfaltering faith.

How oft in my searchings have I been distracted and
 delayed!

O Thou hold me now by Thy gentle hand;

I am always safe in thy holy keeping."

The mystery of Divine Grace is expressed in the following poem which lends the title to the collection.

"I seek no more for I have found Him, not by seeking,
He came to me when I was not looking,
Opening my soul's secret door.

Friends, how can I tell thee of this strange mystery ?

He is seen unsought only through this, the soul's secret.

The *Hymn of Adoration* the closing poem of the collection is a poetic gem and exhibits the artless art of the saintly. We quote it in full.

"Inspiration, Thy coming is like the falling of noiseless
drops on unopened flowerbuds, not conscious of
heavenly heritage.

Thou divine Magician,

Transformer and transmitter of beauty,

Thou dost change all earth's harsh notes into heavenly
unspeakable sweetness.

At Thy touch a broken reed sounds divine harmony.

And mortal voice sings immortal song.

When all is covered by the blank sheet of darkness
naught is seen,

Thou enterest unaware with Thy all-filling light,

Transforming gloom into brightness.

The touch of Thy holy hand is my sole adornment,

A glance from Thy smiling eyes hath poured upon
a shower of countless blossoms.

Now I gather these scattered flowers day and night
ecstatic joy.

For they bear the blessing of Thy divine fragrance.

Thou art the enchantment of song,

Rhapsody of rhyme,

Intoxication of ecstasy !

Thou art the might of the mighty,

Sanctity of the saint,

Melody of the musician !

Thou all-glorious Spirit of transcendent loveliness,

In awe and dumb wonderment,

I adore Thee !"

one of the poems has a charm of its own and it is not possible to do justice to the work by commenting upon it in a full way or by quoting stray poems. We can only say that the "Secret Door" makes a distinct addition to devotional literature and that the country which has given birth to Jayadev, Tulsidas, Tukaram, Ram Prasad, Thiyagaraja and Gnana Phanda continues to be the birth-place of saintly poets who by the charm of their song could lead the wayward soul Godwards. Copies of the book may be had at the Vedanta Kesari Office. (Rs. 2-8.)

Health and Infant Welfare : a monthly Anglo-Tamil Journal edited by Dr. Mrs. Anna Thomas. Annual subscription Rupees Three.

This magazine supplies a real want. Infant mortality and its results, from infectious diseases are higher in India than in other country. The dissemination of knowledge on hygiene sanitation and on the prevention and cure of infantile diseases is of great national benefit. We wish the new journal the success it richly deserves. Intending subscribers should apply to the Manager, 'Health and Infant Welfare' Tinnevely Town.

A commentary on the Siva Gnana Siddhanti of Arulali Sivacharya by M. Tiruvilangam and K. C. Nathan.

The fourteen works on Saiva Siddhanta the Siva Gnana Siddhanti is considered to be the most lucid. Consequently it has a much greater popularity than the remaining thirteen.

A commentary on this great work was begun by Tiruvilangam and owing to the sad event of his demise was left incomplete. Mr. K. C. Nathan has taken upon himself to complete the work which his teacher has so well begun. There is no break in the continuity of method. The commentary appeals equally well to the scholar as well as to the beginner. We are glad to note that it throws much new light upon the Siddhanta system, the cream of Tamilian thought. The book is neatly printed and would be complete in five parts. Four are already out, the first is priced at 60 cents. (ten annas) and the remaining parts at 50 cents. (eight annas) each. Copies may be obtained from the Manager, Sothidaparipalanamadam, Kokkuvil, and from Mr. C. Jambulingam Pillai 20, Karaneswarar Street, Mylapore, Madras.

NEWS AND REPORTS.

A short account of the Ramakrishna Mission Flood and Gangasagar Relief Work, from July 1922 to Feb. 1923

Receipts. Received from the Provident Fund Rs. 4, Received as donation from Belur Math and Udbodhan Rs. 20,898-8-3. Sale proceeds Rs. 113-12-0. Total received Rs. 25,462-4-3.

Expenses made in the Rajshahi, Bankura, Midnapur, Hoogly, Faridpur Districts and Gangasagar mela: Rice for recipients Rs. 4,092-11-3. Fodder Rs. 213-4-6. Cloths and Blankets Rs. 1,200-15-9. Sacks Rs. 2-0-6. Transit charges (Freight, goods cart, coolie, etc.) Rs. 321-11-6. Travelling and inspection charges Rs. 498-9-3. Equipments (Trunks, Utensils, Lanterns, etc.) Rs. 116-13-0. Worker's Expenses (Food, Cloths, Shoes, Umbrellas, etc.) Rs. 789-0-9. Establishment (Temporary erection, Light, Salary, etc.) Rs. 150-10-9. Stationery Rs. 93-4-3. Pecuniary help and Fodder husking Rs. 427-0-6. Medical Relief (Medicine, etc.) Rs. 141-10-3. Agricultural Relief (Seeds, etc.) Rs. 266-2-6. Aids for building houses Rs. 6,851-6-6. Miscellaneous Rs. 1-2-6. Total Expenditure: Rs. 15,199-14-9.

Goods-account:—From 15 centres the Mission distributed 836-7 srs. 12 ch. of rice among 4311 recipients in 276 villages. Besides this 2037 pieces of new cloth, 24 bundles of old cloth, 139 pieces of chadder, 340 Blankets, 764 Banians, 80 mds. of seeds, 40 mds. of Brans, 5 mds. of Dal, 2 mds. of Salts, 100 bundles of fodder, 12 Kahans and 11 pans of straw were distributed for cattle and 686 houses were erected.

(Sd.) SARADANANDA,

Secretary, R. K. Mission



